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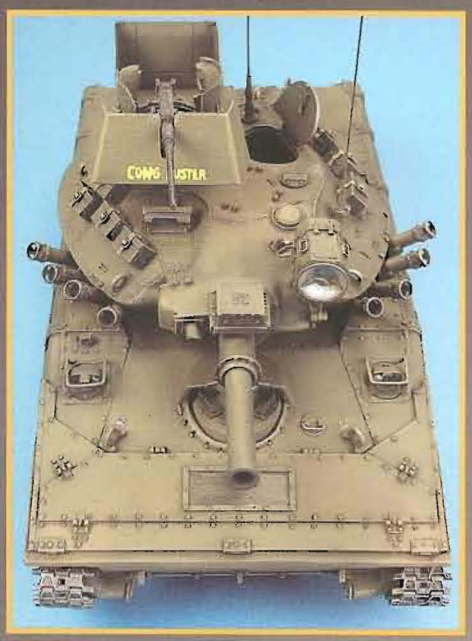

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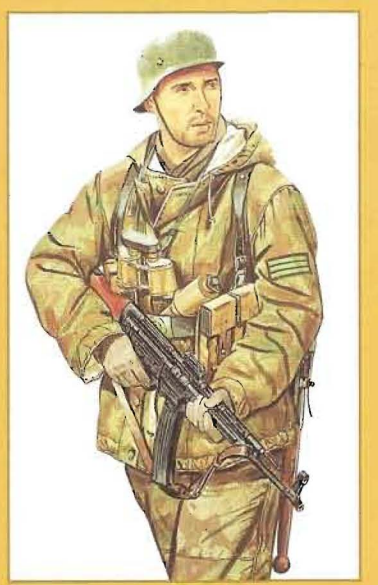

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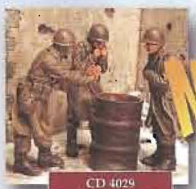

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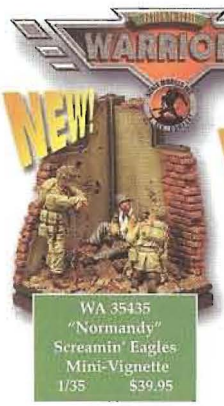

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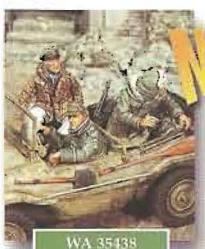

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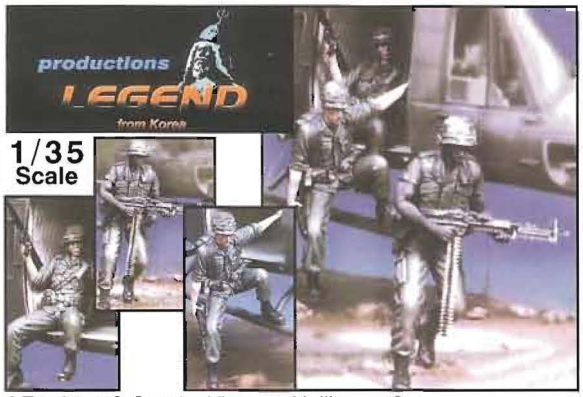

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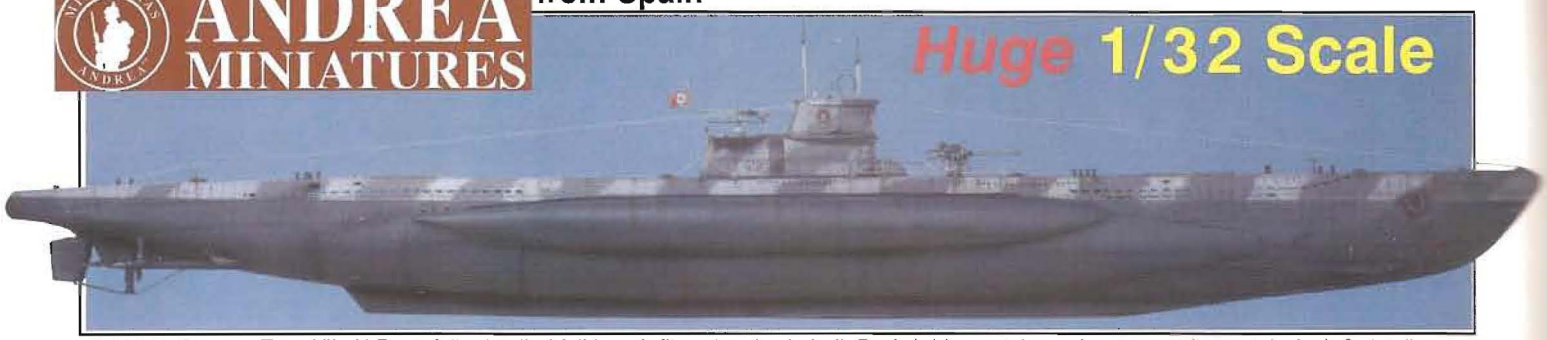

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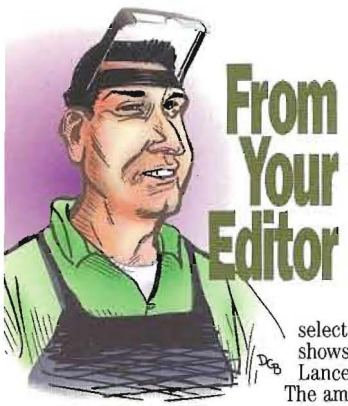
ON THE COVER:

Hey look, it's a Panther! And, you know what? It's real accurate and real easy to build. DML has a winner on its hands with this kit. Look for the review beginning on page 33. Also, Jaguar checks in with its resin and plastic version of the early Sheridan. Coverage begins on page 38.



From Your Editor

I've got no real specific topic this time around, just a grab bag of subjects.

I had a chance to attend the latest AMPS show. This is the Armor Modeling and Preservation Society based around Aberdeen, Maryland. They sponsor a "national" every year in Havre de Grace, which is located just up the road from Aberdeen. It's a small show compared to say, the IPMS nationals, but it's an all armor event. The competition is good sized and there are seminars by such armor notables as Tom Jentz and Steve Zaloga. The location is pretty neat, too. It's held in the local community center, which at first sounds kind of hokey. However, this particular one is nestled back off the main road amidst a stand of trees. There is easy access, plentiful parking and the facility contains the show quite nicely.

About two thirds of the floor space is devoted to the vendor area and this is practically my favorite part of the show. The vendor turnout could rival the biggest shows in Europe. Although the number of vendors is much smaller, the selection of products is wonderfully diverse—perhaps even more so than the European shows. Some old friends were seen on the trading floor like S&J, R&J, M&M, The Red Lancers, RHPS, Eduard, RZM, CRM Hobbies, Armand Bayardi and CMD, among others. The amount of products represented by this crew pretty much blew me away. A ton of European and Asian resin could be found, along with lots of hard to find accessories in a variety of flavors. This place will definitely test your ability to keep your money in your pocket! With this many vendors, it's also a great place just to "window shop" and check some of the more exotic products. I had a chance to peek at Show Modelling, Criel, Decal Star, Accurate Armor, Cromwell, CMK, Jaguar and many others that have generally occupied the mail order realm. This didn't have to result in a sale, but unfortunately it often did in my case... At any rate, it was great to get a "hands on" look at many of these exciting new products. One of my favorite sights of the show is seeing Bill Miley of Chesapeake Model Designs trying to enter the hall unmolested. You see, Bill not only represents his own popular line of armor items, but Royal Models, Friulmodellismo, Model Victoria and a new line called Brach Models. When this guy hits the room, he gets mobbed—you'd think he was the fifth Beatle. He could barely get the product out of the boxes fast enough!

The event is very easy access out of Baltimore International Airport. It's only about a 45-minute drive from the airport to the show. Most folks tend to stay in Aberdeen, just a few miles from the hall. If you've been in hibernation for the last few decades, you may not know that Aberdeen is the location the U.S. Army Proving Grounds and the U.S. Army Ordnance Museum. The museum is a modest sized facility located on the post that houses all manner of small arms and other weapons related to the history of the United States Army. The big attraction is the "tank part" behind the building. Well over 100 historical armored vehicles and artillery pieces are on display there. Access to the museum was limited this year due to new base security. This didn't stop show attendees from going, they just had to be escorted by a person carrying a valid U.S. Military ID. There were lots of guys on hand to help out in this task. Because Aberdeen is an "Army" town, there are plentiful hotels. The Holiday Inn and the Four Points Sheraton (really more like Sheraton "lite") are both very comfortable and reasonable in price. Havre de Grace is a charming little waterside town and there are several attractive looking bed and breakfast facilities, if you want to go that route. Most seem to prefer the after hours scene offered at the hotel bars and this may even be one of the more important reasons people attend! (this is also why beer companies should advertise in this magazine)

If you'd like more information about any aspect of the show, please contact AMPS, P.O. Box 331, Darlington, MD 21034 or see the very comprehensive web site at www.amps-armor.org

And speaking of products

I wish I had a dime for every time I've heard someone bemoan the lack of new products in the hobby. How did we get to be so paranoid as a group? I guess I'm occasionally guilty of this myself. I always get a brief pang of panic when I consider that there may be a lack of new stuff for the Short Takes section. "Ohmigosh, what will we put in there?" In all the years I've been doing this, this has never been a problem (you'd think I'd learn). As a matter of fact, I usually have to cut stuff and stick it in the next issue!

When we gather new product information, it automatically goes into the computer in the form of product names, stock numbers, prices and other basic data. This text file is later fleshed out into the article that appears in each issue. After the basic information is completed, all the products basically get chucked into a big box (labeled coincidentally "new products"). This box is dipped into while writing Short Takes for photography or for the writer to get a better idea of what the product is. Every so often, I've just got to steal this box, stick it on my lap and just root around in there for a few minutes (hours). This was definitely one of those times. The sheer amount of product being released is enough to impress me, but it's the quality that is really knocking me over. And this is not just the quality of the molding, or the execution, it's the quality of the ideas. I suppose what I'm trying to say is, don't worry. We all must be doing something right, because a wider variety of small and large companies keep cranking out cool stuff for our hobby.

Mag mish-mash

We are now back on our regular schedule, which is December, March, June and September. We are endeavoring to beat the schedule a bit in order to allow extra time for subscriber issues to reach their destinations. Squeezing out those few extra weeks is the real tough part. It seems that with every other issue we have a ton of extra material. This tends to speed up production and was the case with issue 28. This is expected to occur again with issue 30.

If you've been asked to return a subscriber card, please be assured that this is not mandatory. We only ask so that we will have written record of your subscription, should the post office require it. They do periodic audits of our list and the written slip is their favorite form of proof. They don't generally request a slip for everyone, but if you can send it back, we greatly appreciate it.

Allied-Axis is cooking along and we are now on issue 6, with issue 7 expected to be released in July. This issue will cover the Pershing and the Panther and should be a great one. I have personally acquired the bulk of the material for this publication and all of it looks great. We currently have material planned for Allied-Axis through issue 16 (2004). As always, the series is a "limited edition." We only print a scant 3,000 copies and then they're gone!

—Pat Stansell

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The newly rehabilitated and released Tamiya Shermans.

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The Mail Sack

Love and lists

First off, just want to say love the magazine... I think it's the best on the market today. OK, now on to the real reason for the e-mail. I was wondering if for future Modeling Guides such as the Sherman and the soon to be arriving Tiger and StuG (drooling over both), we could see at some date guides on the following subjects:

1) US WWII Tank Destroyers
2) British WWII Tanks (covering MBT's, tank destroyers, etc.)
3) Post WWII US and British Tanks (circa 1950-2000)
4) Russian WWII Tanks (Same as the Brits)
5) Post WWII Russian Tanks.
6) US SP Artillery from WWII to the Gulf War
7) A listing of companies who produce tank or soft skin vehicles or both and a listing of after market companies and what they offer.

I hope this might give you guys some ideas, or you may have already thought of these, but I just had to pass them along.

—Hugh H Browne Jr.
thunderrunner@attbi.com

Hmmm... Well, believe it or not, we currently have 27 active ideas for modeling guides and many of your suggestions are among them. This includes the six titles that are being worked on right now (did he say six?) and a slew of others. Unfortunately, these take a long time to develop. There are a few on your list that we hadn't considered, so we'll throw those on the pile.

As far as those lists go, much of this information was originally found in our Armor Modeler's Guide to the Universe. *It's been several years since our first volume and we have been hoping to resurrect this project for some time now. It was put on indefinite hold after the economic circumstances that developed in the fall of 2001. Now that things are more or less back to normal, we are searching for the appropriate place to reinsert it into the schedule. The new version already contains more than 6,800 product listings encompassing more than 350 companies with a great deal of other useful information for the well-informed armor junky. We'll keep you posted on the project as it develops.*

✉

Gaiter gaff

Mini Men in #28 mentions "gaiters" on an American soldier. Civilians and "damn foreigners" wear gaiters. American Marines, sailors and soldiers wear leggings. The Custom Dioramics 4019 U.S. sniper is most likely carrying the M1C, or M1D Garand sniper rifle. Both rifles were basically standard M1 rifles with a flash suppressor, leather cheek pad and provision for mounting a scope. The '03 was often used as a sniper rifle, but the M1 also saw extensive use as a sniper rifle. Both rifles fired the famous 30-'06 (.30 caliber cartridge of 1906) cartridge.

—Ed Keene
kle0124@hotmail.com

Thanks for the info on the rifle. As to the whole "gaiter" question, we've heard the term many times from vets in person and in literature when referring to the "M1938 Dismounted Leggings." Gaiter is a familiar term in the Midwest to describe the type of leggings worn by duck hunters. Perhaps the term was also meant to be a bit sarcastic. An old friend of ours who served in an Army engineer unit in the Pacific for 44 months used to jokingly refer to his leggings as "spats." Like everybody else, he hated his and only kept them around for visiting brass. He preferred the canvas jungle boots ("until they rotted off my feet") and later the M1943 Combat Service Boots (with the high buckle top) or the very hard to scrounge Corcoran paratrooper boots. One of the reasons the leggings were so disliked was that they were tough to get off in the event of a leg wound and they absorbed water like crazy. There were two patterns and the second had eight eyelets instead of 17! Both patterns were also available in white.

✉

20 questions (OK, maybe three)

I received a notice in the mail to renew my MMiR subscription and would like to do so ASAP. What's the best way to do that since Ampersand Publishing already has my credit card information? The card mentioned the first 100 renewals get a cool prize (other than of course a continued subscription to your fine, outstanding, superb magazine).

How do I place an order for that Tiger book that you guys are about to unleash on the world?

Also, I would like to make a "deposit" into the Idea Bank, that wonderful list of cool stuff that just isn't made yet. Here goes...

Soviet WWII - SU-76, any/all Marks, early, late, whatever. Maquette/DML made what was considered a beastly kit of the SU-76M, but c'mon we NEED a GOOD one. It's the second most numerous vehicle produced by the Soviets for WWII and served in the Warsaw Pact and Korea after WWII. It deserves some much-needed attention. Plastic preferred, but resin would be fine. I don't see a conversion for this because it's longer than the vehicle it's based on. Then again, if someone were brave enough to make a "correction" set for the Maquette/DML kit, with new hull, better details and toss in the Zvezda Soviet 76 mm, that'd be just fine with me.

Thanks for the magazine. The website looks promising as well, especially the individual article idea (more magazines could profit from that concept).

—Steve Frost
sofrost@mindspring.com

All righty, we can handle all that. Just so everyone knows, we do not keep any credit card information on file. Although this is slightly inconvenient, we think it best not to have those numbers in any situation where they might be compromised. The "prize" is actually a special deal that changes from week to week. This is only available for our subscription customers. We are crummy at keeping count, but don't wait too long to call!

We are accepting pre-orders on the Tiger title along with several other mail order companies. Among them are Squadron Mail Order, RZM and VLS. We'll gladly take your preorder, but bear in mind that in order to be fair to our vendors, we won't ship before they do. Also factor in that our shipping charges are based on a flat rate, rather than the less expensive sliding scale (based on the total dollar value of the order) used by most other mail order sources.

We couldn't agree more on that SU-76. We did get an advance look at a resin master pattern several years ago just prior to the release of the plastic kit. It was to be produced by an American manufacturer, but the styrene version must have scared them off. It would probably be easier to do a full kit, rather than a correction set. Plastic can never really approach the fidelity of etched brass and the array of shields would make up close to a third of the kit. Great suggestion, we'll stick that one in the Idea Bank.

✉

Mezzano, Spezzano, let's call the whole thing off

MMiR 28 was one of the better issues to date. The article featuring the "modernization" of the Modelcraft Centurion was great. How many people know all those aftermarket accessories are available? How about the Modelcraft kit itself? It isn't an easy kit to obtain unless you special-order it. It's too bad because Modelcraft has some interesting armor kits. Last summer, I assembled their "reissue" of the Tamiya 1/25 Chieftain. It's a great kit, but with some aftermarket accessories it could be great. In the near future, they promise an M2A2 Bradley, that's supposed to shine.

I also enjoyed the article on the Type 61 Japanese MBT, an often-overlooked vehicle. The end result was excellent and looks better than pictures of the real thing. The negative review of the old reissued M41 Walker Bulldog tank was great. Yes, it's an older motorized kit, but isn't this the type of kit we started with? Back then, we initially played with them, but eventually advanced into static models and dioramas (or met girls and wrecked our lives). Could these early, motorized models bring new blood into the hobby? I can't answer, but only hope that they can. It seems that the majority of plastic modelers are adults. Will the hobby be able to sustain itself when the current crop of adult modelers "retires"? The tooling for a new kit is quite an investment, but if nobody purchases the kit, it's guaranteed there will be no future releases. Maybe we shouldn't sneer at the older, motorized kits. In an offbeat way they may save the hobby.

—William Mezzano

This is a weighty issue that we've touched on before in this section. Given that the demographic for our hobby is males from 25-65, I think we still have a pretty good run, even if you take the average age as 40. In our humble opinion, we'd do better getting more adults in the hobby. If you think about it, plastics in general is now geared to the adult. If you factor in the cost of all the tools and equipment, finishing materials, resin kits, etc., you're looking at some bucks. We're all for seeing new and younger modelers come into the hobby, but our little niche is a real tough sell against Sega, the X-Box and Spider Man. Perhaps the perfect target audience is the late to post-college crowd.

Guys that are looking at ways to divert themselves from the pressures of their new jobs and have a little dough to blow.

It's our impression that the old motorized kits are only being released as collector's items. Perhaps there is the hope that they will spark a feeling of nostalgia in the consumer, as well. However, if they do catch the fancy of a younger modeler, we say "get to it."

✉

Come on man, Thank You!

Since I've re-subbed for the fifth year, it's obvious I've enjoyed MMiR a lot. Great subjects, great coverage, great humor. But (there's always a but), I was really pleased when Issue #21, with the Tamiya FAMO on the cover, mentioned the release of the AFV Club M10. It's a kit that I think a lot of armor modelers had been waiting for and I looked forward to seeing it treated in detail. By the time Issue #25, with the Des Kit SdKfz 8 on the cover, rolled around, I'm wondering what gives? By the time #28 rolls out, with yet another Kraut prime mover on the cover, with the same toothy blonde dude from the cover of #21 introducing it, I start thinking this really sucks! Inside, I'm treated to the third lovingly detailed treatment of a Kraut half track since #21 and an item I'm sure most of your readers were just dying to see: the ancient Tamiya Type 61 MBT, to use your own description. The kit and article were both well done, but how many armor modelers in this country give a damn?

I know the German stuff is what sells best in armor, and I buy a lot of it myself, but how can you ignore a kit like the M10, the first reasonably priced, decent kit of this AFV, for two years? The Year In Preview section of #28 mentioned the release of the Academy M10 kit, but by the time that issue reached me, not only had the Academy kit appeared, but their Achilles had as well, not to mention the AFV Club late version M10. So how about a comparison of a couple of these like you did with their M18s? And do it before you do an in-depth piece on Tamiya's re-release of its tired old Walker Bulldog. To use your own words again, come on man, PLEASE!

—Greg Jacobson

We've said it before and we'll say it one more time. There is no fiendish conspiracy surrounding the way we review kits.

There are three essential criteria that we use to determine what is in the magazine. Number one: What gets released. If it's new, we generally review. This is one of the reasons that you see so much German stuff in the mag. This is what people seem to want, so this is how the manufacturers respond. This factor also pertains to accessory sets. When enough aftermarket items accumulate, a feature is often born. This was the case with the Type 61, a kit that's been around for years. All of a sudden there were three really nice detailing sets for this kit. For substantially less than the cost of a resin kit, you could create a model that equals or surpasses a resin kit in quality and appearance. That sounds like news to us. Number two: what we can get our hands on. Sometimes we get samples, sometimes we get a special price and sometimes we just buy it. This process is a lot harder than you'd think. If a sampte is not forth coming, a kit can often be very hard to find. Even some plastic models are lightly stocked and disappear after a few months (try finding a DML M46). Number three: What we get back from our reviewers. This was the case with the original M10 kit from AFV Club. We generally deal with reliable people, but occasionally what we send out, just doesn't come back. This doesn't happen very often, but it might surprise you, like it did us. We've learned an important lesson in all this and the really significant releases get built right here in our offices.

Both the M10 and the Achilles are currently being built for review and both should appear in issue 30 or 31. We have no plans to review the old Tamiya Walker Bulldog, but if it's OK with you we will review the new AFV Club kit when it's released. The idea for a dual review is a good one and maybe we'll cover both the AFV Club M10's, if we can still get them!

✉

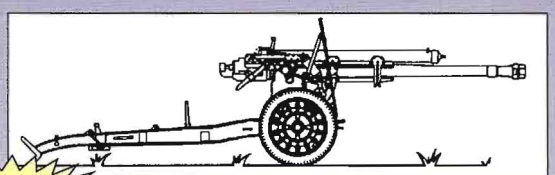
If you would like in on any of the dialog in MMiR, drop us a brief letter written on a fifty dollar bill or better yet, inscribe it on the bottom of a fully functional DMD radio-controlled Tiger I with speed control and optional optical targeting unit and send it to: ***Mail Sack, Ampersand Publishing Co., Inc. 235 NE 6th Ave., Delray Beach FL 33483*** *or* ***mmirpat@aol.com.*** *Letters are sometimes edited for brevity, obscenity and national security, or just to make you sound smarter.*

We sincerely regret that we rarely, if ever, are able to personally enter into correspondence with our readers.

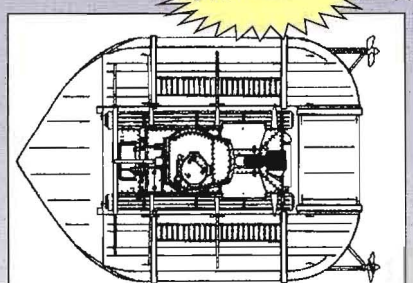
NEW ITEMS • NEWS • NEW ITEMS • NEWS • NEW ITEMS • NEWS

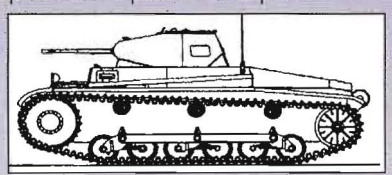
BRACH MODEL

New Line!

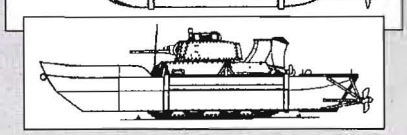


BM-10 SKODA 47mm Pak(t) $54.95
Complete kit with photo-etched parts.

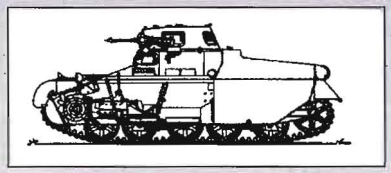




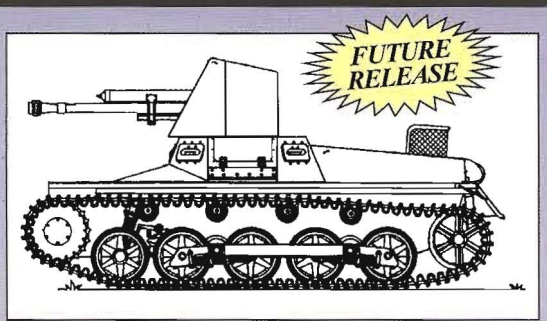
BM-03 Pz II b $27.95
Conversion for Alan/Dragon kit.



BM-04 Pz 38(t) Flotation Raft . .$57.95
Conversion for Maquette 38(t) kit.



BM-06 Pz IB Interior Set $29.95
For the Italeri/Zvezda kits.



BM-12 Panzerjäger I Interior Set . . . . . .TBA
With the 4.7cm gun. For the Italeri kit.

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BM-01 Pz IA Driving School $24.95
Conversion for the HiPM kit.
BM-02 Pz IB Driving School $24.95
Conversion for the Italeri/Zvezda kit.
BM-05 Pz IA Interior Set $29.95
For the HiPM kit.
BM-07 Pz IB Ambulance $29.95
Conversion for the Italeri/Zvezda kits
BM-08 Assorted Rivets $6.95
BM-09 Assorted Nuts & Bolts $6.95
BM-11 Marder III Interior Set . . . . . .TBA
For the Tamiya kit.

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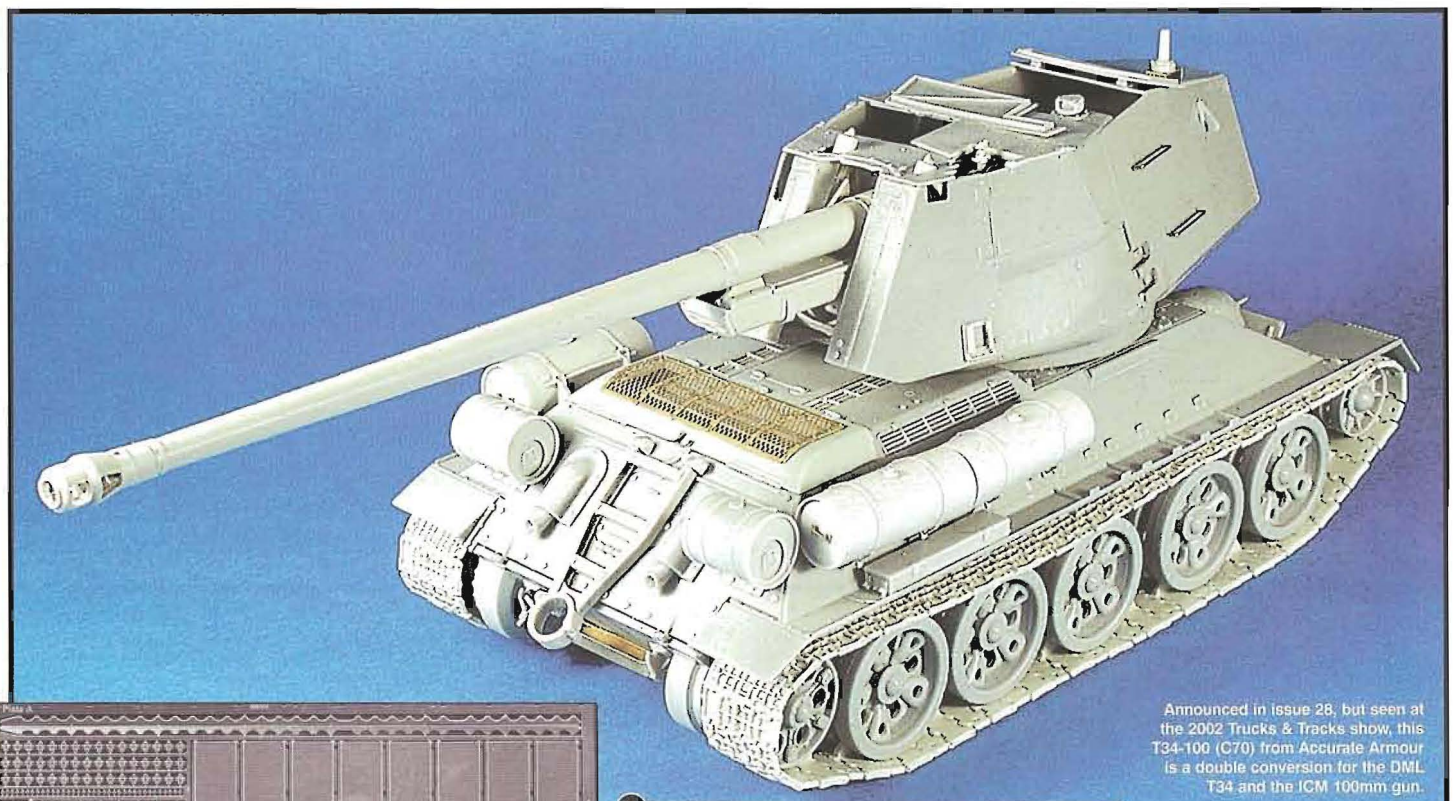
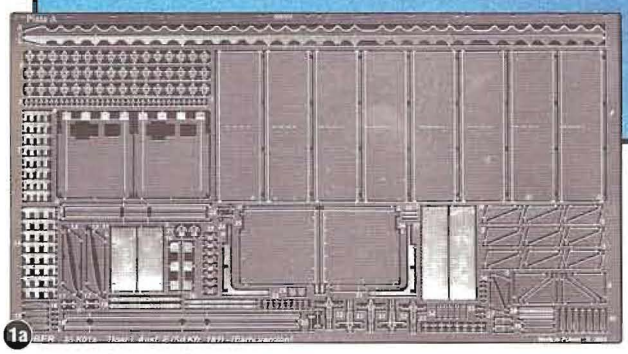
Short Takes

The Year in Preview



Announced in issue 28, but seen at the 2002 Trucks & Tracks show, this T34-100 (C70) from Accurate Armour is a double conversion for the DML T34 and the ICM 100mm gun.



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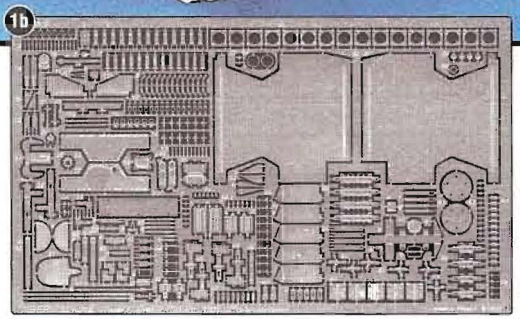

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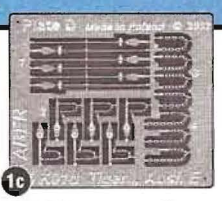

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Aber

Aber has given the 35th scale Tiger the same treatment that it gave the big 1/16th kit. This is 35K01, **Pz.Kpfw. VI, Tiger I, Ausf. E (Sd. Kfz. 181)-Early Version (Tamiya) (1a-c)**. This is actually quite a set, containing no fewer than five sets of etched material, along with two different sizes of cable, brass rod, a small piece of wood and a Jordi Rubio barrel. The set is markedly different from their earlier set on the early Tiger. There are entirely new parts (like the rear stowage bin) and many of the parts have been improved and redesigned. The older sets were also "ala cart" in that one needed to buy several sets, such as side and front fenders, to complete a single kit. One of our favorite additions is the fret containing the insulators and wires for the smoke launchers. All in all, it's not a bad value at $64.99, when one factors in all the various goodies contained.

Also on the "new" list is D-05, **Flowers** at $12.99; 35102, **Sd.Ah. 116 Trailer basic set** at $23.49 and 35103, **Sd.Ah. 116 Trailer additional set** for $23.49.

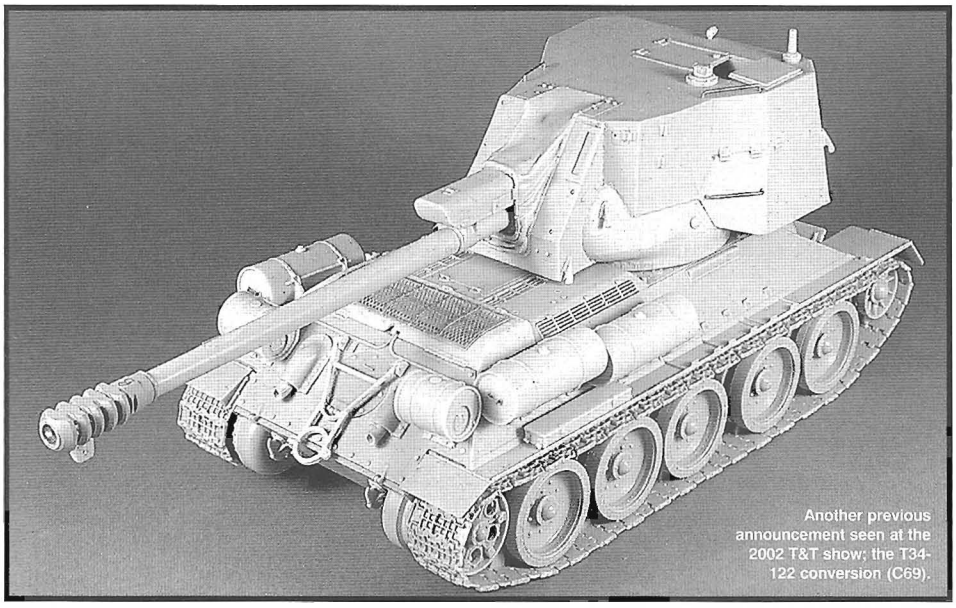
Academy

Academy has been the source of big news as of late. Here is the official run down by stock number. 1304, **M151A1 IDF Shirma (4)**; 1323, **M151A1, Light Utility Truck (5)**; 1397, **M10 GMC Duck Bill Turret Late Version** (Mid-late 2002); 1398, **US M3A1 Stuart** (includes interior details) and 1399, **British M3 Stuart "Honey"** (also including interior details). The M151A1 are out now and the Stuarts will arrive in May (Honey) and July. The M10 should roll out perhaps as early as June. The M10 releases have made a substantial impact and we can hardly wait for the M36 shown in last year's Academy catalog. No release information or stock number on that one yet.

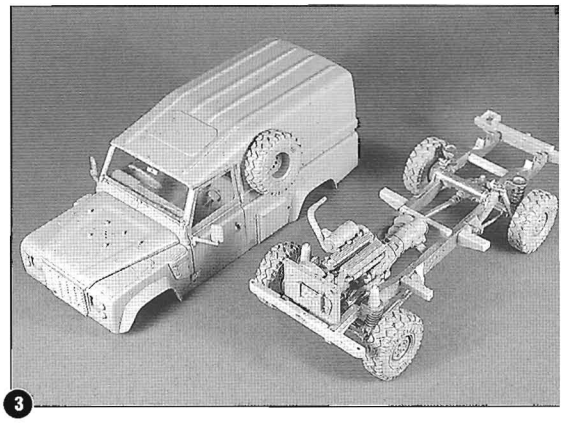
The Stuart releases caused quite a stir at the 2002 Nuremberg show and we can say it's about time somebody did these very relevant vehicles. We like the choice of types, too. The M3A1 will make for some very colorful markings and the Honey will satisfy the Brit crowd. We're hoping for a series! We'll keep you posted.

Accurate Armour

No flies on these guys. It's always a steady stream of goodies from the "house that resin built." They had lots of cool stuff on display at the Trucks & Tracks, including the masters for many future projects. Here is their newest release list. KT121, **Ferret Mk-2/3 ARV** (full kit); A64, **Scammel Pioneer Track** (metal and etch); A65, **Allied 3-ton Truck Load** (resin); A66, **Modern Equipment/Stores** (resin); A67, **Centurion 100 Gallon Fuel Tank**; C71, **Egyptian SU-100** (conversion); C72, **Danish Leopard 1A5 DK** (conversion); B35001, **T34/85 85mm ZiS-S-53 Aluminum Gun**; B35002, **SU-100 100mm D-10S Aluminum Gun**; F46, **WWII Brit Soldier Drinking**;



Another previous announcement seen at the 2002 T&T show: the T34-122 conversion (C69).



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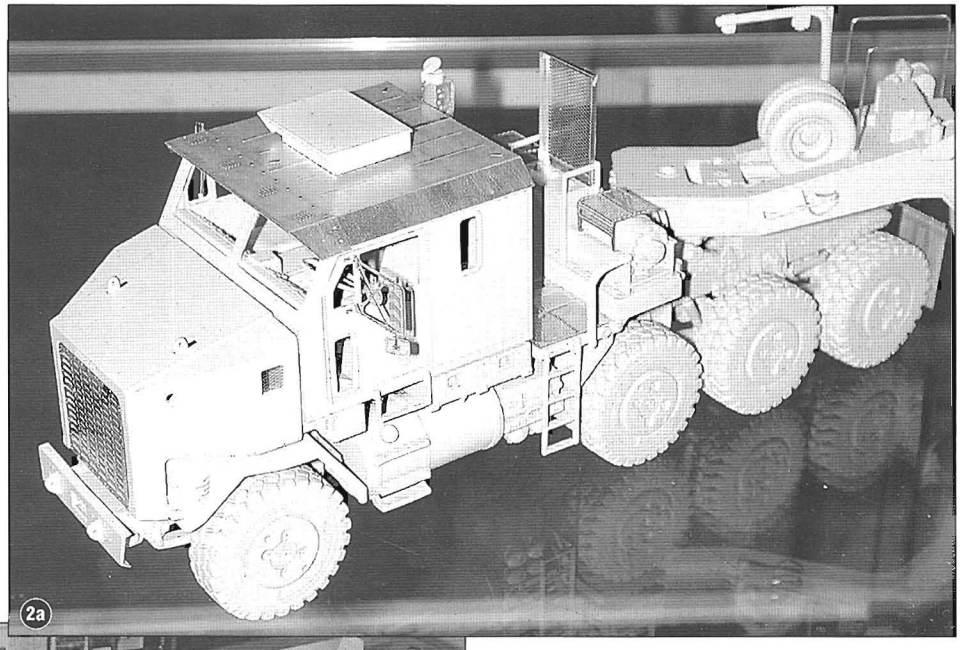
Accurate Armourly is www.accurate-armour.com

Airedale Castings

This new company was offering three new items at this year's T&T show: detailed **Somua S35 Turret German version; detailed Somua S35 Turret, French version (6)** and detailed **Somua S35**

F47, **WWII British Truck Driver**; F48, **WWII Brit Mechanic Working**; F49, **WWII British Crewman & Jerry Can**; FS07, **Raising the Flag at Stanley** (2 figs); D33, **PSP (Pressed Steel Planking)**; DE17, **Challenger-1 Decals** and **DE18, Centurion MBT Decals**.

AA's future projects include KT111, **US Marine Corps M103A2 Heavy Tank**; KT112, **Albion FT15N 6x6 Low profile gun tractor**; KT113, **M4 High Speed Tractor**; KT128, **Diamond-T 968 6x6 4-ton Wrecker**; KT129, **Diamond-T 969 6x6 4-ton G. S. Cargo Truck**; KT133, **Crawler Crane WW-2/Post War RB 17/19**; K30V, **US Army M114 APC (Vietnam)**; K30E **US Army M114A1/A1E1 (Europe/Police)**; C66, **Churchill "Toad" Flail Tank**; C67, **Chieftain ARV Conversion**; C68, **Chieftain ARRV Conversion** and **S10, British "X-Craft" Mini Submarine** (waterline). As mentioned, many masters were on display and among them were the M103, Diamond-T wrecker and the Crawler Crane. This last item is totally cool and was used extensively by U.S. and British forces in Europe. Also on hand was the newly completed master pattern for the modern **M1070 Oshkosh Tank Transporter (2a, b)**. This thing is freakin' huge! It's highly impressive, with enormous slabs of photo-etch and resin. The kit will be



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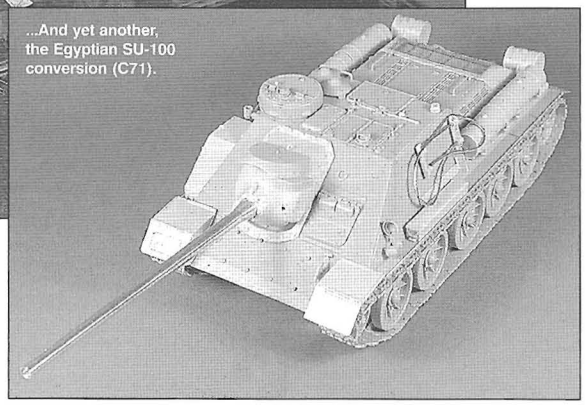


...And yet another, the Egyptian SU-100 conversion (C71).

available in May. Don't tell the wife...

We also spied a gorgeous little **Land Rover Defender XD (3)** that was being produced in cooperation with British Leyland, the maker of the real thing. This would go great in a variety of modern schemes. An entire series of Defender XD vehicles is planned.

As always, your direct pipeline to all things

Replacement Stowage Bins (with mounting rails). All were very nicely cast and executed, and we've already put them to use on at least one project. Just the things to spice up that old Heller kit.

No U.S. prices or stock numbers were available, but interested parties can contact Airedale Castings, 31 Queensway, Bingley, West Yorkshire, England, BD16 4PB or at airedalecastings@hotmail.com

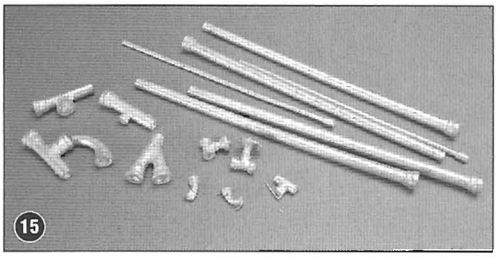
Armored Brigade Models

Armoured Brigade has gone and done an **early M4A1 direct vision Sherman**. The kit is sort of a double conversion as you'll still need an appropriate turret and a set of tracks. This model sports all the early features like the Lee style suspension and the three piece nose, and the level of quality is up to the normal ABM standard. The set even includes a tow cable, which we think is a first for any Sherman kit outside of Italeri!

We have no word on the retail price as of yet, but the stock number is ABM023A. For more information, contact Armoured Brigade Models at P.O. Box 35163, Westgate Post Office, Ottawa, ONT Canada K1Z 1A2. E-mail: acpabmsid@igs.net

they're doing' the trailer, too! 3536, **25-ton Trailer for the Faun L 912 SA. (12)**

The retail pricing was not available at press time, but for more information contact, Elite Militär modellbau, Eichgasse 13, D-52 393 Hütgenwald Strass, Germany. Telephone/Fax: 02429 2086.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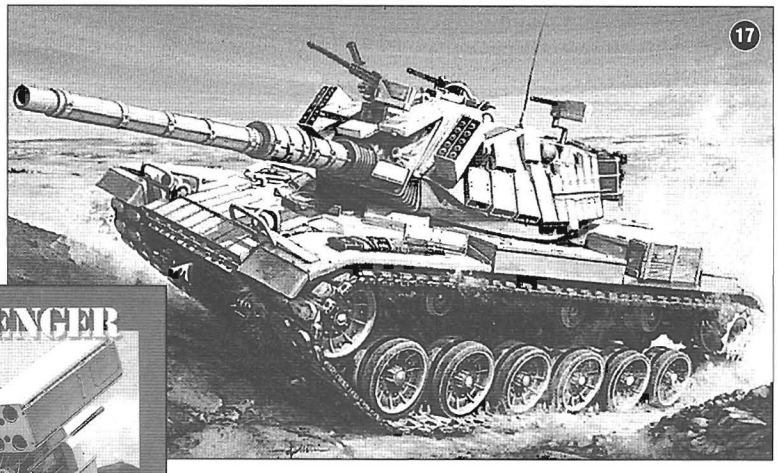
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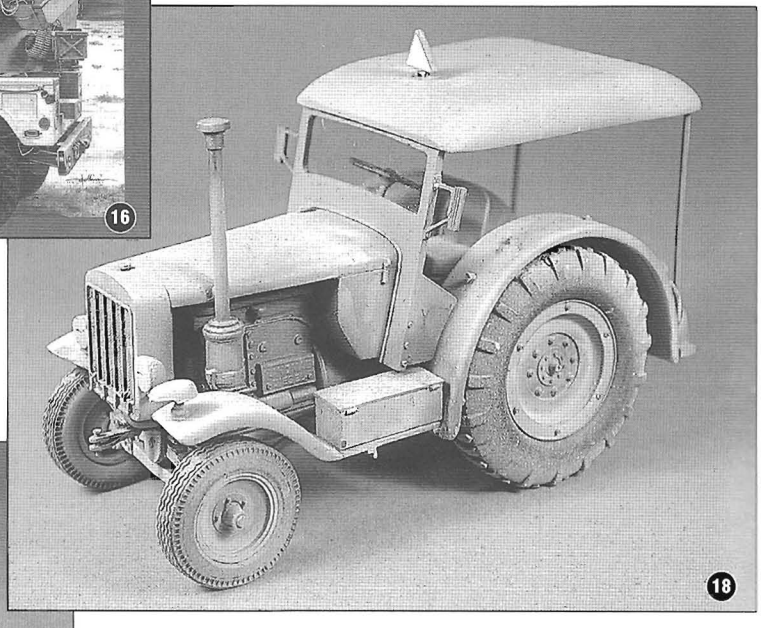
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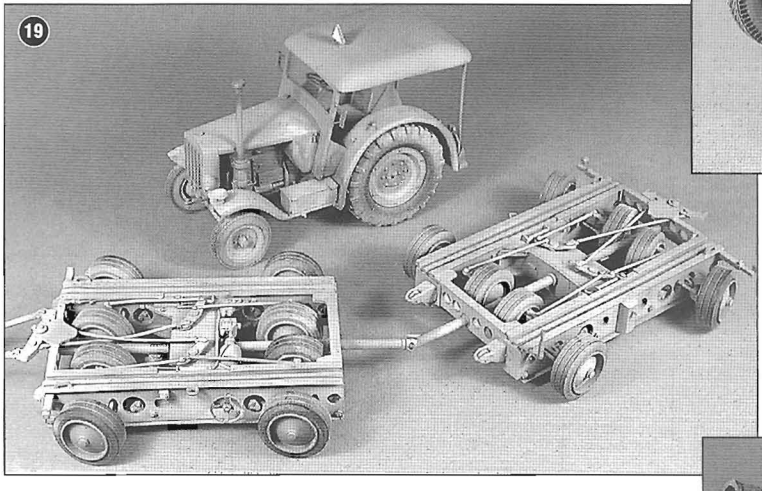
Fort Duquesne

As promised, Fort Duquesne is expanding its line of 1/35th scale armor accessories. The following new resin items were seen at the 2002 AMPS show. FDA102, **38(t) Update Set, Road Wheels, Idlers, & Drive Sprockets (13)**, $12.95; FDA103, **38(t) Update Set, Road Wheels, Idlers, & Drive Sprockets**, $12.95; FDA104, **Hetzer Update Set, Road Wheels, Idlers, & Drive Sprockets**, $12.95; FDA105, **Hetzer Update Set Road wheels, Idlers, & Drive Sprockets**, $12.95 and FDA106, **38(t)/Hetzer Drive/Idler Upgrade variety pack**, 2 each of various drive sprockets and idler wheels for Panzer 38(t) and Hetzer kits, $12.95.

All the sets are neatly cast in resin the roadwheels contain the correct bolt pattern on the reverse face.

We have new contact information on Fort Duquesne. It is Fort Duquesne Military Miniatures, 463 Amherst Street, Buffalo, NY 14207. Phone (716) 465-2272, fax (716) 874-6610. E-mail: ftduq@stargate.net

Disregard the contact information found in issue 28 and our apologies to that lady in Pittsburgh who keeps getting their calls...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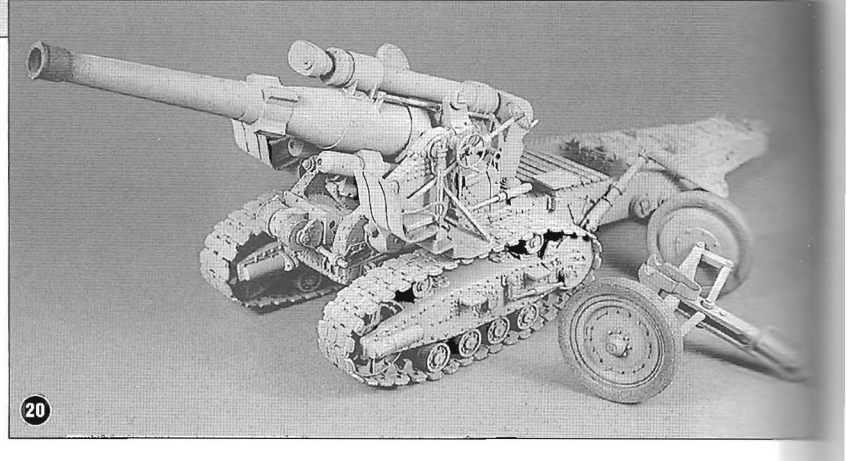
Hansa Systems

We're not sure why, but this line of buildings and architectural accessories is just plain 'ol cool. Perhaps it's the fact that the material is styrene, a material we are all very familiar with. Either way, check out the following new products. HS003, **French Ruined Farmhouse Corner** (complete kit) **(14)**, $34.00; HS420-1, **Shutters-Wood Large**, Fits part #400, 2 pieces, $2.45; HS425-1, **Shutters-Wood Small**, 2 pieces, $2.45; HS610-1, **Shutters-Louvered Small**, 2 pieces, $2.45 and HS620-1, **Shutters Large**, 2 pieces, $2.45.

The shutters are meant to be used with Hansa's different window frames. If you haven't checked these guys out, you should. The line now encompasses hundreds of various architectural items, as well as full building kits, streets, curbs and sidewalk sections—all in 1/35th scale!

A very spiffy catalog is available for $8.00 (refunded with first order). Contact them at Hansa Systems, 8 Meadow Glen Road, Kings Parks, NY 11754.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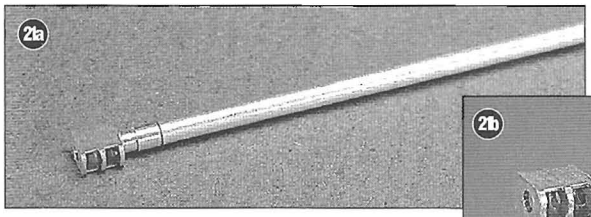
Hudson & Allen Studio

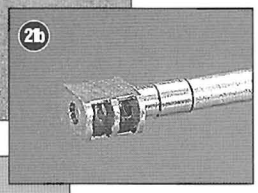
We've haven't heard from these guys in a bit, but they are still cranking out cool diorama items. Here is the newest that we've seen. 9607, **Plumbing 9 (15)**. This is the outside part of the waste system in older homes or the interior fixtures that are seen in damaged buildings. The set includes various sized pipes and fixtures cast in white metal. 9624 is **WWII U.S. Airborne ETO**, waterslide decals of uniform patches for your 1/35th scale figures and 9713 is **U. S./British Camouflage Net**. This is the netting you would see over any arty emplacement and it is actually pre colored and woven with "scrim" material. Pretty cool.

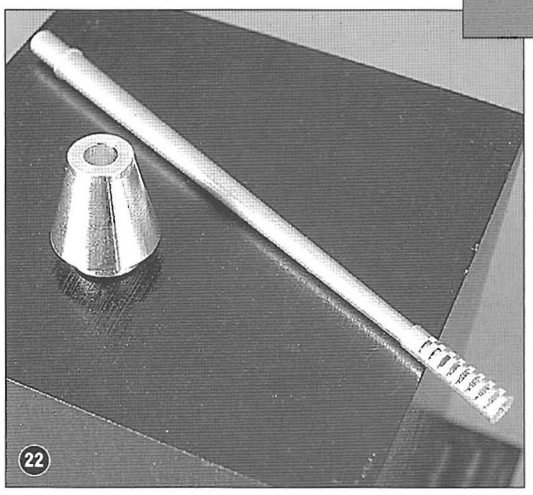
For more information contact Hudson & Allen Studio, P.O. Box 1905, Monroe, MI 48161.

Italeri

New product dope is now starting to come back in from the Testor/Italeri crowd. Up to bat now are 0638?







Look for a review of the 203 Howitzer in issue 31. VLS is the exclusive distributor in the states.

Modeling Artisan Mori

This modest line of resin figures and accessories only came to our attention last year after a trip to Japan. There, the line was only sold through specialist shops or local clubs. The figures are really terrific and the casting is some of the best we have ever seen. The following list is in addition to what we are covering in the Mini-Men section. NO-MGA01, **German uniform & accessories** (folded and draped clothing) **(24)**; NO-MGP01, **German Tiger I Ausf. E schw Pz. Abt.503 Gepack kasten**, for Tamiya Tiger I (early) **(25)**; NO-MGP02, **German Tiger II Last Version Gun mantlet & rear hatch set**, for Tamiya Tiger II (Henschel); NO-MGP04, **StuG III type A 75mm Barrel** and NO-MRP01, **KV-1S, KV-85, SU-152 late standard type wheels**.

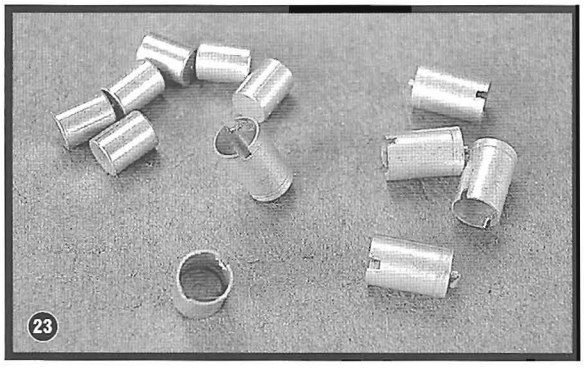
This is by no means a complete list. We know of several other figures in the line and there may be other stuff, too. The line is currently being offered through Mission Models and up to date pricing information can be found at www.missionmodels.com

Hummer Avenger, $22.00 **(16)**; 06389, **US Marines M4 Sherman**, $25.00 and 06391, **M60 Blazer**, $29.00 **(17)**.

We're probably the last ones to publish this, but 6392, **DUKW Amphibious Vehicle** is now listed as a future release. Boy, does this seem to be a natural for the styrene medium! A price and release date was not available at press time, but we'll print any information we can get in the next issue.

Legend Productions

Legends, who hail from South Korea, are becoming known for some very intriguing armor items. Their latest releases haven't disappointed us at all. 1025, **K1A1 Detail Set #1**, turret, main gun, photo-etched, for Trumpeter, $51.98; 1026, **Detail Set #2**, upper hull, road wheels, photo-etch for Trumpeter, $65.98; 1029, **M1 US Tank Accessory Set** (various stowage and gear), $21.98; 1031, **M60 Tank Accessory Set** (various stowage and gear), $21.98; 1032, **M48A3 Tank Engine Set**, $49.98; 1033, **M48 Tank Accessory Set** (various stowage and gear), $10.98; 1034, **Gun Truck for AFV Club M35**, $54.98; 1038, **XM-134 Mini Gun Set** (two pieces), $8.48 and 1039, **Ammo Box Set**, $8.48.



Legend is sold through Squadron Mail Order and your local hobby shop.

Militur Models

This is a brand new company from Romania. The owner is formerly a pattern maker from Wespe (also a new company from Romania) and Wespe still casts the line. There's some pretty exciting stuff and the line looks like this so far. MV 35003, **Marmon Mk III/Breda**, $95.95; MV 35004, **Chevrolet LRDC VA Model**, $95.95; MV 35005, **Opel 1-ton Limber**, $79.95; MV 35006, **Hanomag R40**, $74.95 **(18)**; MV 35007, **Kaelble Strassenschlepper** (Prime Mover), $110.95; MV 35008, **Culemeyer 60-ton Trailers** (2), $79.95 **(19)** and MV 35009, **BM-4 Russian 203mm Heavy Howitzer**, $120.95 **(20)**.

Model Point

Model Point products come from Russia and they have gained a very good reputation over the web, where they can be found through various overseas mail order houses. This reputation is based around the amazing feats of miniature milling that Model Point pulls off on almost everything they do. Here's a small sampling. 3515, **2A20 (U5TS) 115mm T-62 tank gun barrel** for Tamiya kit, $15.00; 3526, **M242 25mm Barrel M2A2/M3 Bradley (22)** for Tamiya kit, $16.00; 3528, **2A42 30mm Barrel BMP-2 (21a, b)** for Dragon kit, $22.00; 3545, **Detail of the radio antenna pot for modern Soviet tanks and armored machines**, $6.00; 3560, **2cm Flak 38 barrel** for Tamiya kit, $16.00; 3564, **3.7cm. Flak 36 gun barrel** for Tamiya kit, $15.00; 3551, **90mm Nb. k.wg smoke/grenade thrower (charged) for German tanks**, $18.50 **(23)**; 3557, **15cm Barrel sIG-33 Bison II**, Gun for Alan Hobbies kit, $6.00 and 3560, **2cm Flak 38 barrel** for Tamiya kit, $16.00.

Nearly all of their barrels contain milled muzzle brakes rendered right on the end of the barrel. This starts to get almost creepy with the complex, multi-baffled Bradley and BMP items. Other barrels contain precise rifling. These all are really something to see.

Mission Models provided our samples and they are among several companies who are known to stock the line.

Pro Art Models

Who? It's OK, they're new—just relax. We originally discovered this line at the table of a Belgian model club. Apparently, the premier items were once part of a individual's modeling project. And so, an idea was born. What's available, so far, are several comprehensive update sets for the HEMTT M-978 Oshkosh fuel truck. They have all been designed for the Italeri kit and consist of four sets: cabin, exterior, wheels and refueling pump. The line breaks out like this.

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AR35146 $8.95 — M4AE8 US 6th A.D., 15th Btn.
Builds one Sherman of the 15th battalion. Includes photos of the actual vehicle and placement schematic

AR35147 $4.95 — M4(105) U.S. 6th A.D., 69th Btn.
Builds one howitzer Sherman of the 69th battalion. Includes photos of the actual vehicle and placement schematic.

AR35049 $10.95 — U.S. 2nd & 3rd A.D. Yellow codes (24")
Markings for M5A1, M2, M3, M4, M4A1, M4A3, M8

AR35050 $10.95
Markings for M5A1, M3A1, M4A1, M10, M3.

AR35138 $7.95 — M4A1 2nd A.B. El Alamein
These markings are specific to Direct Vision M4A1 Shermans used by the 2nd Armoured Brigade. Builds two vehicles. Comes with complete instructions.

White stars for Shermans (Enough for 2 complete vehicles)		
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Bumper codes (white)		
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Stencil style (15 vehicles)	AR35066	$6.95
Allied air recognition panels (printed with fluorescent inks)		
Fluorescent blue (convoy vehicles)	AR35169BL	$14.95
Fluorescent orange	AR35169N	$14.95
Fluorescent red	AR35169R	$14.95
Fluorescent yellow	AR35169Y	$14.95

This is only a small sampling of what we have to sell. See the web site or catalog for complete listing.

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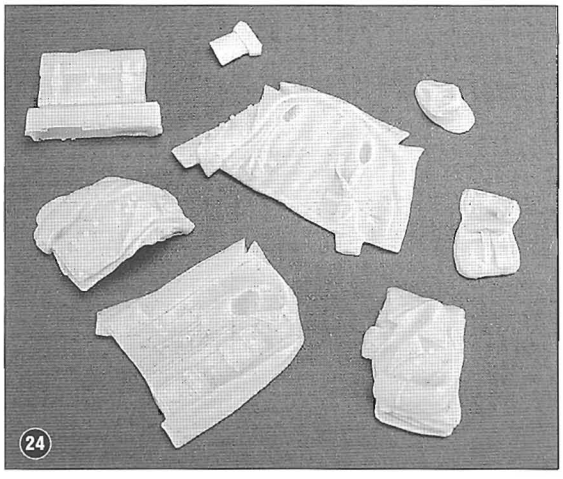
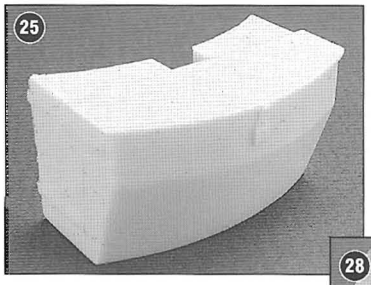
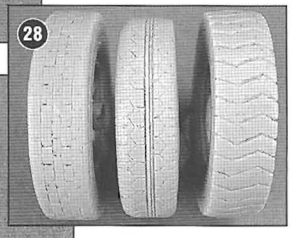
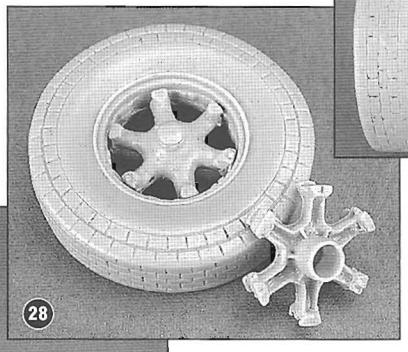
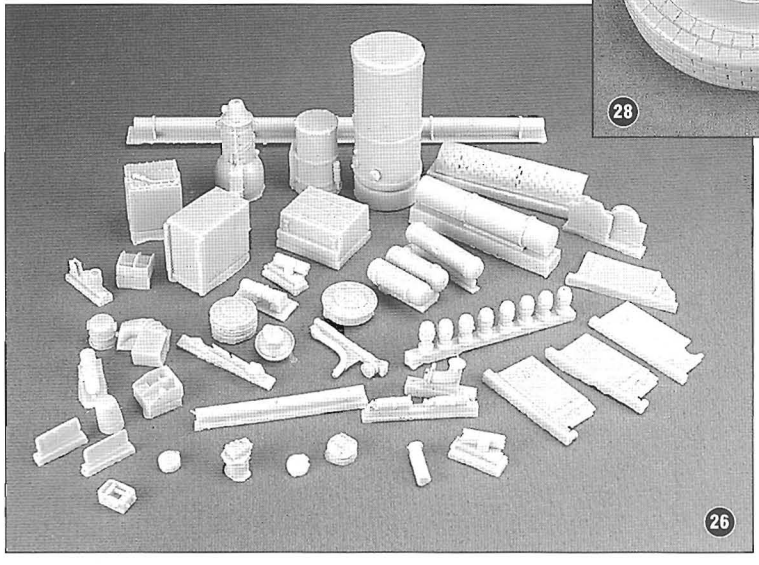










PAU-35001, **The Pump**, 15.66; PAU-35002, **The Exterior**, 26.82 **(26)**; PAU-35003, **The Cabin**, 18.09 and PAU-35004, **The Wheels**, 17.24.

We have all four of the sets and can say that the casting is great. All of them go at the Italeri kit with a vengeance to replace or create the level of detail we crave. The parts are cast in a gray-colored resin and the sets are bagged with a header. The instructions are comprehensive, but all the images can also be seen in larger, color form on their web site. How cool is that?

All the list prices are in Euro, which is roughly one to the dollar. To us, this makes them an excellent value. We know of no U.S. importer as of yet, but they are doing direct sales. Contact them at Pro Art Models, Gooreindse Leunen 35, 2440 Geel, Belgium. E-mail proartmodels@pi.be

PSP

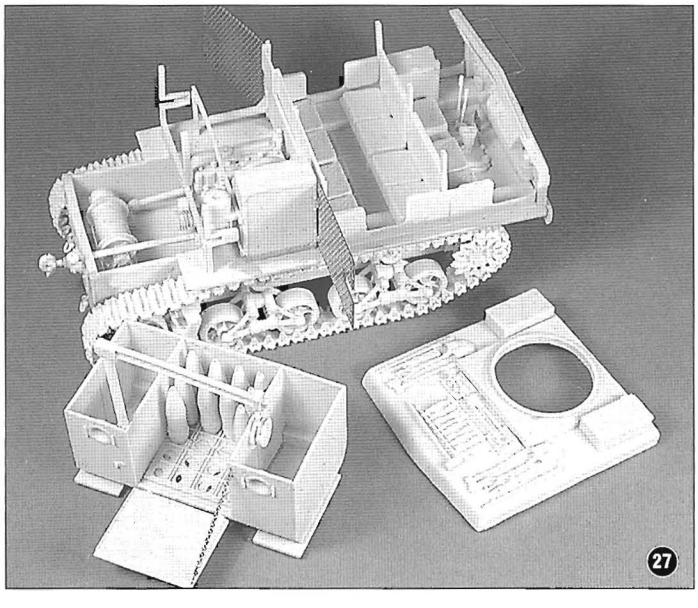
You remember these guys. They're the ones with all those cool 6-ton U.S. trucks and the Treadway Bridge. Their latest is none other that the **M4 High Speed Tractor (27)**. This kit is listed as item 35037 and the retail is listed as a whopping $125.00 or about $185.00. We have seen the kit and are actually working on it right now. It's a fine kit, with resin and unusually nice photo-etch parts. We're combining this with the AFV Club 8-inch gun for a review in issue 31.

For more information, see the PSP ad in this issue.

R&J

In addition to representing a fair amount of awesome stuff, you know R&J also has it's own line of resin products, right? One cool new item (actually three) was to be seen at this year's AMPS show. These will be **replacement wheel and tire sets for the Tamiya 8-ton half tracks (28)**. Each set will have a different tire pattern and the hubs are rendered to duplicate the design of the real thing, i.e. separate wheel rims and hubs. Great for a tire changing scene. The three sets will be RJ35270, **Standard/Fall pattern**; RJ35271, **Winter Pattern** and 35272, **Sand Pattern**. Production kits will include three tires of one pattern plus three hubs (front and spare). All prices are TBA.

Keep an eye on the R&J ad in MMiR ASAP and keep it on the QT and don't forget to BYOB to the FBI.



Resicast

This Belgian company is keeping up the pace! New in vehicle stuff are 35157, **Airborne Jeep, "RSCA" pannier carrier**, conversion for Tamiya Jeep with photo-etched parts, 47.04; 35158, **Airborne trailers, two trailers with tilts**, 25.90 and 35160, **GMC Dump Truck Conversion (29)** for Tamiya GMC, 57.00. New figure sets look like this. 35569, **2-inch motor & crew**, two UK soldiers lying firing 2-inch motor, 23.75; 35570. **Bren gun team "marching order,"** 33.25; 35571, **Soldier kneeling with Sten**, one figure kneeling with Sten at the ready. 10.93 and 35572, **Infantryman with rifle at the ready**, one figure peering around corner with rifle. also at 10.93 (all prices in Euro).

And, if you're a Sherman lover, hold on to your hat, because Resicast is about to do what might be the most incredible Sherman kit ever done. 35159 will be **Sherman M4A1 75mm dry late** and 35161. **Sherman M4A1 75mm dry interior**, a detail set for 35159. Two local Florida modelers are assisting on the research of these kits and so we've had a chance to see test castings several times. They look wonderful. The main kit is said to be a precursor to a U.S. Duplex Drive kit. Hubba-hubba!

One of the items that will be in the Sherman kit is now available as an accessory. 35232, **Sherman Drive Sprocket type 2 late (30)**, is a resin and photo-etched delight for 9.75 Euros.

Both The Red Lancers and Mission Models are known to stock the Resicast line in the U.S. To contact the company directly, they are at 517 Vieux de Binche. 7000 Mons, Belgium. Telephone/fax: 32 65 35 18 65. E-mail graham.sellar@yucom.be

Royal Model

Royal is also not one to rest on their laurels. In addition to the figures seen in this issue's Mini-Men, the following products are also brand new. 254, **European storehouse ruin (part 2)**; 260, **European storehouse ruin (part 1)** and 268, **Fenders Tiger II**.

All of Royal's products are represented in the states by Chesapeake Model Designs and ordering information can be found in their ad located elsewhere in this magazine. Full color photos of many of the products can be seen at Royal's web site at royalmodels.com

Tamiya

Not too much in the way of brand new stuff, this time around. It has mostly been confirmations of the stuff we heard prior to the Nuremberg Toy Fair. The big Pershing is now in our offices (56014, **US Medium Tank M26 Pershing (31)**). This is a real fine kit, with tons of additional detailing features not found in the previous Tiger kit. It appears to be much more of a plastic replica, than a RC model. However, that difference is perhaps even blurrier than it was on the Tiger! We're real excited to dive into this one and we'll be bringing you a full report in an upcoming issue.

Another stock number bopping around is 35252, **German Frontline Reconnaissance Team**. This is a neat little multi figure set for the Tamiya Schwimmwagen.

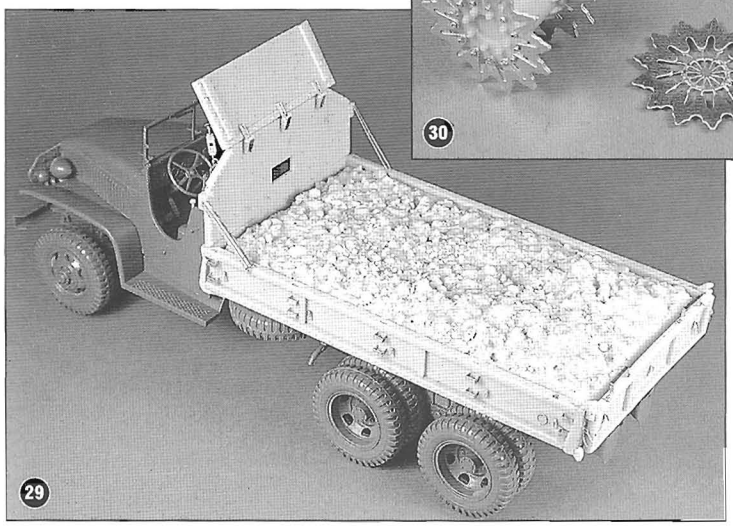
The **1/35th scale version of the Pershing** is now appearing on the Japanese version of the Tamiya web site. The kit number will be **35254** and the Japanese release date is June 2002. We have scant information about the kit, but we will give you a quote right off their web site "This model will feature characteristic single-pin tracks and suspension reproduced with the latest in slide molding

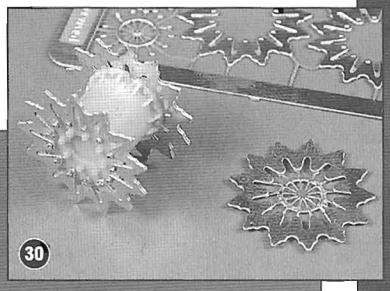
technology that actually forms to the terrain!" We're not sure if that means link-to-link, or what. However, it does sound intriguing. This kit will be officially announced at the upcoming Shizuoka Hobby Show. Rumor has it that we may see another big announcement at the Tokyo Hobby Show held this fall. What it might be is anyone's guess, but we'll let you know as soon as we have a stock number.

A second version of the big Kübelwagen is also coming. This will be 36205, **German Kübelwagen Type 82 European Campaign**. Retail and release dates are TBA.

They're baaaack... Check out the current reissue list. 35042, **U.S. Light Tank M3 Stuart**, $15.00; 35097, **U.S. Light Tank M5A1**, $17.00; 35110, **U.S. M8 Howitzer**, $13.00 and 35116, **U.S. M106A1 Armored S. P. Mortar**, $17.00.

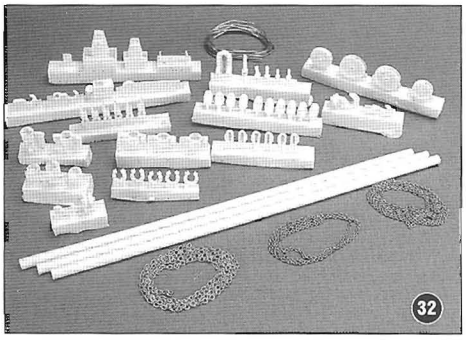
Surf for Tamiya news at www.tamiya.com





Tiger Model Designs

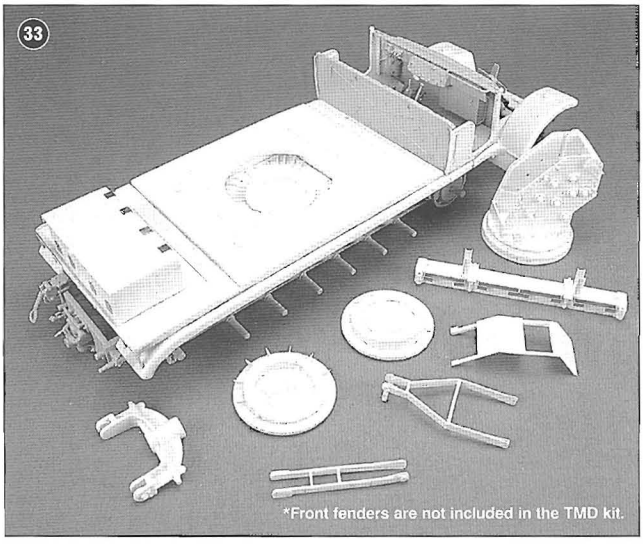
Tiger is a brand spanking new company that has real ambitions in the resin after market business. They have assembled a pretty aggressive product line and if they keep cranking it out, they're going to be a lot of fun to have around. Some of the first items we saw were 351001, **WWII German 2 ton Jib Boom (early)**, $13.95 and 351002, **WWII German 2 ton Jib Boom (late)**, $13.95 **(32)**. These are two pretty good ideas and it's a wonder they haven't been done before. This seems to be a theme with this company, which makes this line especially exciting. Both the crane kits are complete with all the various tubes, connectors, chains and other gear to construct accurate replicas.



TMD's big news is the release of their 6-ton crane for the Tamiya FAMO. This will officially be 352020, **Sd.Kfz 9/1 Famo 6-ton Bilstein Crane Conversion (33)**. It's quite a kit, with the entire crane and platform included, along with all the related paraphernalia to create the model. Decals are even included for the many placards on the crane housing. The kit retails for $69.95.

Also new is a very welcome update set for the Alan Marder with the 15cm sIG 33. This is 352051, **Grille-M Update**, $16.95. An ammo-carrying version is also available. 35052, **Grille-M Schlepper**, $19.95, which provides parts to modify the interior.

We've covered the major points, but there are still other products to check out. TMD has a comprehensive web site located at www.Tigermodels.com Those not Internet afflicted can contact Tiger Model Designs, Inc., PO Box 1254, Youngstown, FL 32466. E-mail: Tigermodels@aol.com



Tiger Werke

You know Jef Verswijvel, right? He was an integral part of the Verlinden Productions master building team for many years, along with Willie Peters. Both of them later started KMC (Kendall Model Company) and Jef went on to his own aircraft venture called Black Box. His newest venture is Tiger Werke and he is going back to his first love (and ours); armor.

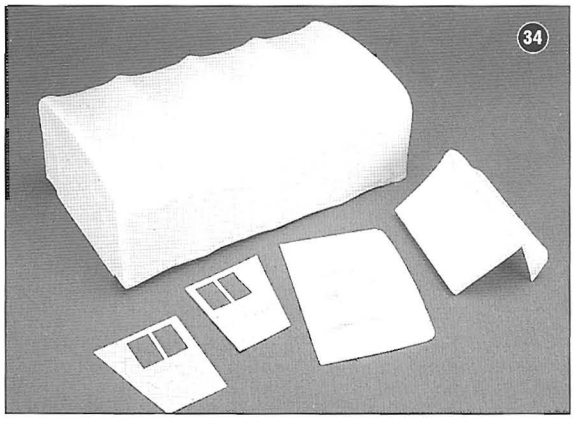
The first four products will be available as of August 2002. They are 35001, **10.5cm le FH18(sf) auf Geschützwagen Hotchkiss 39H(f)**; 35002, **European Theatre Cobblestone Section**; 35003, **European Theatre Sidewalk Section** and 35004, **Kübelwagen Radio Car (Type 821)**. The Geschützwagen will be a resin and plastic extravaganza and will include big chunks of the H39 Heller kit. This should make it much easier to built and perhaps keep the price down.

For more information contact D&V Selections USA, PO Box 623, Rowlesburg, WV 26425. Fax (304) 454-2022. Or, see their web site at www.tigerwerke.com and e-mail at D&Vselections@aol.com

Ultracast

Tucked inside the latest sample for Mini-Men was AC35010, **Polish Helmets 1939 (with liners)**, $7.95. These are really amazing little castings and as the name states, they are complete with delicately sculpted interior liners.

Contact them at Ultracast, PO Box 20005, Woodlawn Postal Outlet, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1H 6H6. Telephone: (519) 823-0181, fax: (519) 823-1160. Web site: www.ultracast.ca and e-mail: info@ultracast.ca



Verlinden Productions

The following list was snagged off the VP web site: 1746, **T55/T62 Damaged Road Wheels**; 1755, **US Marines WWII-Korea** (8 all new); 1756, **Red Devils British Paras WWII**; 1762, **Jagdpanzer IV Lang Zimmerit** (Dragon); 1763 **Jagdpanzer IV Side Skirts** (Dragon); 1765, **US Rifleman & B.A.R. Gunner**; 1766, **Fallschirmjäger Assault** and 1767, **Fallschirmjäger MG Team.**

See it all for yourself at www.verlinden-productions.com

The VLS Corp

We got us a brand new line from VLS. The new line is called Trakz and it will be composed exclusively of 1/35 armor and soft skin items. This new line will consolidate many of the armor items seen in the Warriors and Custom Dioramics line. Some of the early items were previously part of the Custom Dioramics line, but generally all new armor items will be under the Trakz banner.

TX 0001, **GMC 2-1/2 Ton Cargo Load**, $15.95; TX 0002, **GMC 2-1/2 Ton Canvas Cover, Cab Top & Doors (34)**, $25.95; TX 0003, **Canvas Roof/Cover for Opel Blitz or Opel Maultier**, (Resin), $24.95; TX 0004, **LVT-A1 Alligator Detail Set** (Resin & Photo Etch), $32.95; TX 0005, **LVT-A2 Conversion Set** (Resin & Photo Etch) (IL); TX 0006, **LVT-A4 Conversion** (Resin & Photo Etch) (IL), $46.95; TX 0007, **LVT-2 Conversion Set** (Resin & Photo Etch) (IL), $32.95; TX 0009, **GMC 2-1/2 Ton External Stowage Set**, $14.95 and TX 0010, **Sd.Kfz. 11 Canvas Roof/Cover.**

We have seen the majority of the items in the line so far and the LVT stuff is particularly compelling, with large chunks of beautifully cast resin and slabs of photo-etch. Look for many of these little hotties to appear in future MMiR features.

Wespe

We first introduced you to these guys back in issue 27. Since then, they have become part of the massive assortment of VLS products and we bring you the following update on stock numbers and pricing. WS 35007, **Stalinetz S65**, $130.95; WS 33008, **Opel 4x4 Flak Platform**, (TA Flak 20mm), $95.95; WS 35009, **Mercedes 170V**, $98.95; WS 35010, **Opel 1-ton Truck**, $98.95; WS 35011, **C.M.P. 15 CWT Kubel**, $95.95; WS 35014, **Humber FWD Staff Car**, $95.95; WS 35015, **S-2 Tractor**, $130.95 and WS 35016, **Hanomag Gasogen**, $103.95 **(35)**. A future item is WS 35013, **Mercedes Benz L 6500.**

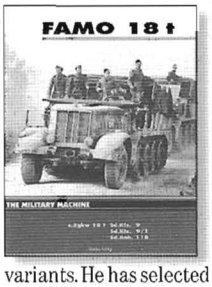
These items tend to fly out of the warehouse pretty quickly, so we suggest you nab them up fast!

Book Reviews

Ural-375/4320
by Frantisek Koran, Ales Knizek, & Michal Burian
Wings & Wheels Publications
Soft Cover
72 pages, 24 pages of color
ISBN 80-86416-11-9
$8.00

Presented here is a comprehensive look at one of the workhorses of the Russian army and its many variations. Included in wonderful detail photos are the GRAD; 43203 Shelter Truck, Crane, and Radar Shelter; 375 Crane, Tractor, and Wireless Shelter; and P-18 Radar Range Finder. The book provides detailed photos of the engines, cabs, undercarriages, and all external components. Particularly impressive is the close-up look at the GRAD rocket launcher. If you're into modern Russian vehicles, this one's a must have.

FAMO 18t
by Stefan König
The Military Machine
Soft Cover
116 pages, B&W throughout
ISBN 3980521648
$34.95



Every so often a publication comes along that you absolutely must possess. This would be one of them. This soft cover book could be thought of as a love letter to the FAMO tractor. The author has painstakingly researched hundreds of photos from a variety of different sources, showcasing several different variants. He has selected them especially for their clarity and most are shown full-page size. The author has also cleverly tied in many of the other reference sources on the FAMO to his captions. For instance, he mentions that a certain detail can also be seen at a different angle in another reference source. We were especially pleased to see Allied-Axis number three mentioned several times throughout the book! This "cross referencing" method is an excellent example of non-linear thinking (or something like that). Run; do not walk to get this book. We know that it is only being imported into the states in small batches. Don't touch your Tamiya kit without one!

SEND FOR FREE COMPLETE PRICE LIST

0004	M4A1 Early Hull with closed rear deck	16.00
0008	M4A2 Hull with closed rear deck	16.00
0009	M4 105 Howitzer kit turret and hull	25.00
0010	M4 Howitzer turret set with resin barrel	16.00
0011	M4 Early turret with open loader's hatch	9.00
0012	M4 Early turret with open pistol port	9.00
0013	Firefly turret with hull components	12.00
0014	T-23 turret, oval hatch with aluminum barrel	17.00
0015	T-23 turret, round hatch with aluminum barrel	17.00
0016	M4 concrete appliqué	7.00
0017	M4 with pieces/wood appliqué	7.00
0018	M4 3 pieces/steel appliqué	7.00
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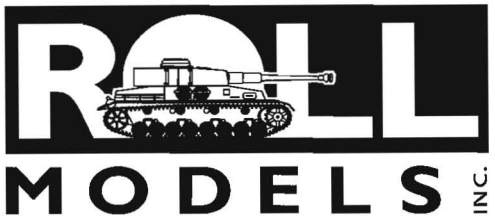

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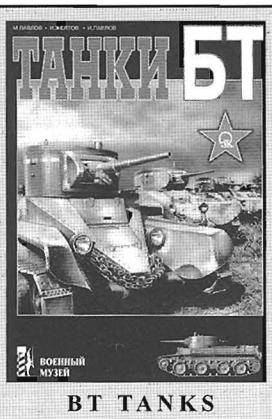
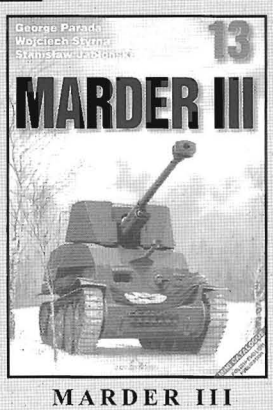


BT TANKS
$33.49



MARDER III
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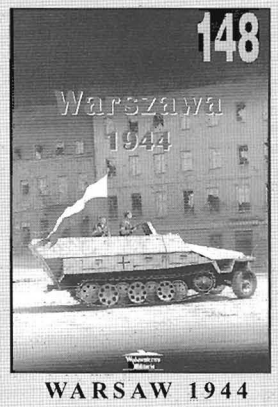

WARSAW 1944
$19.99

PANZERZUG
$TBA

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HALHIN-GOL BATTLE
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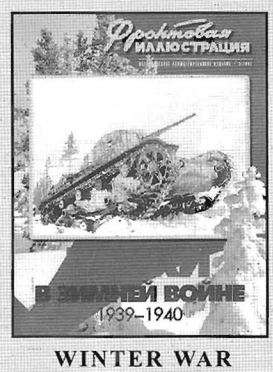

WINTER WAR 1939-1940
$22.99

PRELUDE TO BARBAROSSA
$22.99

BATTLE OF CRIMEA
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C L A S S I F I E D S

WANTED: 1/72, 1/76 scale and smaller armor, equipment and figures. Books, magazines and information on the German and Italian armies in Africa during WW2. Instructions from conversions, photo-etch and regular kits showing vehicle interiors, engine compartments and super detailing items. Military and police patches. Contact Peter Rechkemmer, 3410 Sands, El Paso, TX 79904

WANTED: Looking for unbuilt Gunze armor kits. Will trade or purchase. Have large collection with many hard to obtain kits for trade. Send info to Ted Paris, 551 Wegman Road, Rochester, NY 14624.

WANTED: No time limit. Please include phone number and price/ condition first letter. Books/Mags: Armour Modelling #5. Gizmology #1. MMiR V1 #2, V2 #1. Issues 2 & 32 of Steelmasters. AFV News, TANKETTE 1993 and on. Foreign & US IPMS chapter pub-lications. Issues of Military Modelcraft International, Military Modelling, Military In Scale, Scale Models International, Tamiya Model Magazine and Tamiya News. Dio Bldg. & Accessories: Deauville's #110 'The Bridge,' #112 Russian Log House. Hudson & Allen 1/35 expanded foam bldg. Kurton #007 3-story 3-sided ruined bldg. Magus Program Design/Stevens Architectural 1/35 foam board/basswood French Corner Cafe, Russian Wood House, Small Wood Barn and/or any of their blueprints/plans. Alemany 1/35 architectural accessories. Any old Blockhaus plaster items. 1/35 vacuform facades from Delta and Remi. Kits/Figures: ANT/Palmer/PYRO 1/32 1940 Ford Tudor Sedan. All three are dif-ferent molds. Perry vacuform conversion for Matchbox 1/32 Legere. Tamiya 1/25 Patton, US Tanker, US Radio operator, Rommel figure. Still need DML/DRAGON 1987 & 1988 catalogs. Thanks to all that helped with previous wants. Mike Overstreet, 5257 Luwana Drive, Roanoke, Virginia 24018-3323, (540) 774-7244, 7 to 10PM only Eastern.

U.S. RESIN KIT MANUFACTURER seeking master pattern makers for armor related subjects, i.e. kits conversion, figures. If interested please send name and address, phone number to: Commander Series Models, Inc. 551 Wegman Road, Rochester, NY 14624.

ARMOR, AIRCRAFT & SHIP COLLECTION: Over (450) 1/35scale armor, 1/350 scale modern warships, and both 1/72 & 1/48 scale modern jet aircraft. WW2 to modern armor and figure kits. Both current and out of production kits. Also, many resin conversions and full kits. Decal set and ceramic diorama kits. Many kits still wrapped. All unbuilt and unpainted. GREAT DEALS! Send LSSAE with $.55 postage for list with asking prices. Allen Chubb, Jr., PO. Box 134, Lykess, PA 17048-0134 or call 717-362-1120 after 6 p.m. EST.

FOR SALE: one 1/15 scale Bandi Tiger I, built and painted to perfection. Set up remote. Looks real nice. Call me at 973-628-0574 after 6 p.m. for details.

FOR SALE: Roskopf HO Scale Military Vehicles. German, Russian, NATO, Write for list: Christopher Gill, 580 W. Lewision, Ferndale, MI 48220-1204.

THE HISTORICAL MINIATURE FIGURE SOCIETY OF COLORADO meets on the first Thursday of each month from 6:30 PM. to 8:30 PM. at the Aurora Central Public Library, 14949 East Alameda Drive, Aurora, CO 80012. For more info contact, HMFSC, PO. Box 461562, Aurora, CO. 80046 (303) 693-7924

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL MODELERS ASSOCIATION: meets the second Friday of each month (except holidays) in the Provident Bank community room, 1690 East Florida Avenue, Hemet, California at 7:00 p.m. CAHMA welcomes modelers interested in historical scale modeling, including armor/ordnance, aircraft, car/vehicle, historical figures, ship/boat, space/sci-fi, railroad, diorama and vignette. For more information, call 909-652-0556

IN SEARCH OF PENPALS AND MODELERS to exchange with. Can offer all models of Zvesda Plastic Model Co., ICE Co., Alan Hobbies/VM Co., AER, Start Model, models which are of a high class, and some books and magazines on modern military equipment and that of WW2. My interests include weapons of WW2 produced by Tamiya, DML, Italeri and ESCI in 1/35 scale. Also interested in books and magazines on techniques AFV and model catalogues. Write to: Alexandr A. Rjazanov, ul. Kronshtadskaja, d. 75, kv. 19, Makeeva-14, Ukraine - 339014.

MODELER FROM THE UKRAINE who would like to get in touch with other modelers to exchange models. I am looking for contacts with North American modelers. I will answer all letters sent to me. Andrey Kozlov, Zvenigorodska, 12 kw. 43, Zaporozhye - 93, 330093, Ukraine.

WANTED: Looking for a boxed UBER modeling knife set. The company that made them has gone out of business. If anyone has one for sale or has information on how to get one please let me know. Write or call: Larry McHam 1148 Simpson Dr. Hurst, TX 76053, 817-268-3167. E-mail is cynthiam@airmail.net.

WANTED: German military books WW1, WW2, East German. New or used period pictorials. Please respond to PJR, PO. Box 122, Martinsville, NJ 08836.

WANTED: Concord Publication books: T64 & T90, T54/55/62 and Arsenal of Aggression. I am willing to pay a reasonable amount for these books in good condition. Please send information on these books and prices to John Wiley, 3120 Mountain Pass Road, Troutville, VA 24175.

WANTED: Tamiya photo album gallery books titled "Pachi" Vols. 55 to current issue. Please send info to: David Dees, 8125 Jeanie Lane, Knoxville, TN 37938, 423-922-2891 evenings.

WANTED: 1 part #A3 outer wheel for tamiya kit #35203 Jagdpanther; 1 part #D13 hatch for Tamiya kit #35176 Panther G and 2 of part A4 inner wheel for Tamiya kit #35087 Stug IV. Contact Robert W. Marshall, 43 Brookfield Court, Toms River, NJ 08757, 732-341-7487, until 10 p.m. Eastern time. Web site: ClancyTRB@aol.com.

FOR SALE: Built 1/35 scale armor kits. Nicely done with some external detailing. Please advise us of your particular needs or wants. Will consider requests to build. Currently, over 100 finished. Contact Bill Whitley, 311 Bundy Avenue, Endicott, NY 13760. Phone: 607-748-7922, E-mail: bill0637@aol.com

WANTED: Tank Magazine Special- Israeli Tanks & APC's; Panzer Magazine- The Iran-Iraq War; Tank Magazine - any issue; Verlinden #705, T-55 Update, #714 T-55 Applique Armor; AEF Designs - any conversion kit (Israeli, Soviet, Iraqi, American); Azimut/ADV-PLO figure, Russian Tankers, French Tankers (Modern), #35110 XM233E1 Tow Launcher; Born in Battle Magazine-any issue; Military Enthusiast any issue; War Data - any issue; RAIDS Magazine - any issue; Friulmodellismo Figures, Iraqi Tankers, Yugoslav Troops, Civilian Photographer; Chesapeake Model Designs, T-54 turret, T-62 (early turret), M60 Turret (early production), M48A1 Conversion Kit; Jaguar - JS II interior. Contact Joseph Chiaramonte, 8711 26th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11214.

GOOD99 –New list of civilian /political /military/historical related pin, brochures, books, magazines, videos and other items. Mostly WWII to present. Send Two Dollars for GOOD99. Thank You. Bill Whitley, 311 Bundy Avenue, Endicott, NY 13760-3201 IPMS#20788. (607) 748-7922. bill0637@ aol.com.

WANTED: DML/Dragon Red Devils Paratroopers figure kit or resin figures in similar poses. Will pay any reasonable price. E-mail to simon@openstore.com

WANTED: Looking for ESCI 1/9th scael Kübelwagen. Must be unbuilt and all peices attahced. Please e-mail me selling price and cost of shipping to: Ironputts@yahoo.com

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WANTED: Pro Models resin 120mm (1/15 scale) SdKlz 234/2 PuMA eight wheeled armored car Unbuilt, built, any condition. Contact : Robert McGuire, 482 W. San Ysidro Blvd. PMB 842 San Ysidro, CA, 92173 USA Phone: (619)671-5400 (619)662-1420. Email: ignacio@biospherical.com or carellano@hotmail.com

WANTED: 1/35, 1/24, 1/15, 1/16 assembled or unassembled motorized armored vehicles. Contact Bruce W. Smith at gbeske@uswest.net or send your list with prices to 5808 Arbour Ave., Edina, MN, 55436

THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL MODELERS SOCIETY: meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month at 7pm. We are one of the oldest chapters in IPMS/USA. For more information contact David Kimbrell at ivandak@aol.com or Rick Jackson at rjackson@socket.net

FOR SALE: BELLONA military vehicle prints. Have series 1thru 30 less 7, 15, 27, 28, 29. Each profiles at least 4 vehicles. Asking $5.00 each or $115.00 for the lot. Have AFV PROFILES #1, 6, 8, 11, 14-16, 18-20, 26, 32, 41, 46, 52. Asking $7.50 each or $100.00 for the lot Write or call J. Heiberger 12553 Duggan Rd, Central Point, Or 97502 (541)855-9532 after 10.00am pdt wkdys. Or via E-MAIL "BITCH-N-HOLLAR@JUNO.COM"

WANTED: The Show Modelling upgrade #044, for the Italeri German motorcycle and sidecar. Reply to: simon@openstore.com

WANTED: Model Art Co. book, (German Super Heavy Tank Maus) by A. Sergeev, I. Gellov, M.Pavlov and I. Pavlov. I am willing to pay a reasonable price for this book. Contact: Greg Nichols 428 Arrowhead Rd. Selma, AL 36703, phone. 334-875-5164.

WANTED: MMiR back issues #1 to 10, #17 & 19. Hunnicutt's Stuart & Sherman books. Squadron armor #5 Nashorn. These are for using not collecting. Will pay reasonable price based on condition. Contact with price etc. K. Bickel, 1225 Hickory, Palmerton, PA 18071.

AMPS EAST 2002 Third annual AMPS Northeast regional at the Wayne Police Activities League, Wayne, New Jersey, September 14, 2002. Co-Sponsored by Eastern Front AMPS and AMPSCT. Contact John Gazzola, 188 Laurel Point Road, Dayville, CT 06241, (860) 778-5742, e-mail: johngazzola@prodigy.net.

WANTED: MB Models APX-4 Turret for the Heller Somua S-35. Alan Denton, 17 Clinton St., Everett, MA 02149. (617) 381-0371. Email: privateer1812@yahoo.com

IF YOU LIKE PIÑA COLADAS, getting caught in the rain, if you're not into healthlood, if you have half a brain, if you like making love at midnight in the dunes of the cape, you're the lady I've looked for, come with me and escape.

WANTED: One-piece tracks to fit the following 1/35 scale armor. StuGs, Panthers Tigers, M46, M26, T34, M4-M51 with HVSS suspension. Prefer Tamiya, AFV, Academy. Italeri would be acceptable. No rubber tracks. I need 4 of M5-M51, 3 of M26-M46, 4 of T34, 6 of StuG IV, 4 of Panther, 3 of Tiger I and 4 of StuG III. I have many sets of DML, Tamiya individual sets. Due to eyesight, etc. I can no longer handle individual tracks. I have quite a few pieces of armor to finish. Contact Robert W. Marshall, 43 Brookfield Court, Toms River, NJ 08757 (732) 341-7487 up to 10 PM e-mail at Clancy TRS@aol.com

FOR SALE: Ten well painted and assembled resin, late world war two German figures. All are in appropriate splinter, oak leaf or dot pattern camo. Figures are mix of Verlinden, Warriors or Dragon. Asking price is sixty dollars. E-mail Matunk@aol.com.

The Oklahoma Historical Modelers Society is one of the oldest chapters in IPMS/USA. We now have a site listed in Yahoo Groups. This provides information on the society with pictures, messages, reviews, etc. David Kimbrell - Moderator, e-mail: tanstaafler@yahoo.com. http://www.groups.yahoo.comlgroup/okhislmodsoc

FOR SALE: various figures 12" of Dragon, 21st Century and Hasbro of 'Nam, WW2, modern and other. Then I have 1/35/54mm figures of various European firms like Andrea, Beneito, Royal Model, Des, and of same American firm like Verlinden, Warriors, Jaguar, S&T and other figures of rare Asian firms like CD Yoshi, Takahashi, Kochel, Show Modelling, Imperial Gallery (Arnhem), Gunze Sangyo and other, the period are WW2, 'Nam. modern, west, ACW and also same 120mm figures of WW2 and 'Nam. contact Mario Stefani, Via Ferrovia 21, Coperchia di Pellezzano (sa) cap.84080, Italy. email: roseto02@inwind.it

WANTED: Firepower: A History of the American Heavy tank by R.P Hunnicutt, Kirin, catalog, Kirin 150mm figures—Vietnam and Desert Storm. Ed Barber, 551 Waxhaw Hwy., Monroe, NC 28112. (704) 243-1154.

Every subscriber to Military Miniatures in Review is entitled to a free classified ad for the length of their subscription. Submit type written copy only (no handwritten ads accepted). There is no space limit, but be as brief as you can (we mean: don't be a hog about it). Corrections, sales or omissions should be brought to the attention of the publisher as soon as possible to prevent re-occurrence. E-mail classified info to mmir35701@aol.com

The Idea Bank

The following is an extension and compilation of all the wish lists and "we gotta haves" that have appeared in the magazine over the years. The list also reflects a few brain storming sessions where we just sat around with a few books and shouted out what we liked.

We have divided it into three categories: plastic kits; resin kits; and conversions and updates. A few of the ideas appear in both the plastic list and the resin list. Most would pick plastic over resin due to the cost, but we'd be glad to have either. A lot of what's listed is rather obvious, like the German half-tracks and the LVT's. A few of the plastic ideas are rather odd, but the entry of the eastern European companies into the fray has demonstrated that the sky's the limit.

Basically, we don't warranty any of the items listed. We think they are all sound, but we are not saying they will all sell. The deal is that if you are a manufacturer, large or small, and you see something you like, then by all means make a withdrawal—it's free! All we ask is that you let us know so we can strike it from the list.

If there is something that you don't see here, then by all means feel free to make a deposit—no matter who you are.

Please note that items that have been announced or listed since the previous issue are shown with a line struck through the subject. Notes on who and where follow. Items are displayed like this for one issue, then removed completely.

Plastic Kits

British Triumph Motorcycle
WW2. We've had the German bikes in plastic, but never this one.

British Bedford 15-cwt 4x2 truck
WW2. Very numerous soft skin.

British Morris-Commercial 30-cwt 6x4 truck
WW2. Just because it's neat looking.

British AEC Matador 4x4 truck
WW2. Useful for hauling around all that scale artillery.

British Humber Mk I Armored Car
WW2. 4,300 of them were used on all fronts.

British 17-pdr Archer SPG
WW2. We've been promised one from VM, but it's still a no-show. The towed gun wouldn't hurt either.

British Saladin
Post war. Widely used six wheeled armored car.

British Cruiser Comet
~~*WW2. ICM once had it on their box sides, but rumor has it that it's canceled.*~~ *BACK ON AS ICM STOCK NUMBER 35091.*

British Cruiser Challenger
WW2. A logical follow-up to the Comet.

British Centurion
Postwar. Many variants, used extensively by the Israelis as well as the Brits.

British Mk VIB Light Tank
WW2. Widely seen and used in the west and in the desert. It seems a natural in plastic.

British Sherman "Flail" Tank
WW2. Maybe based on the DML M4A4 kit?

British Bofors 40mm AA gun
WW2. This was the Swedish designed gun used by the British and others.

British Daimler Mark II
WW2. The neat little armored (or is it armoured?) car.

British Sexton II
WW2. The Canadian version of the Sherman chassis (Grizzly) with the 25 pounder field piece mounted on top. Do the Grizzly, too, while you're at it.

French Char B1
~~*WW2. The famous French heavy tank).*~~ *ANNOUNCED FROM RPM*

French AMR35
WW2. Cool little cavalry tank.

French FCM36
WW2. French medium. Later used by the Germans as an SPG platform.

French Laffly/Hotchkiss S15R
WW2. Early war six-wheeled artillery tractor. Also the S20TL and the S35T.

German Panzer II variants
WW2. Still missing the A, B and F in a "modern way."

German Panzer III variants
WW2. Still missing the A, B, C and D.

German Panzer IV variants.
WW2. Still missing the A, B, C, and a modern tooled D.

German Panzer III/IV hybrid
WW2. While you're at it. Used an interleaved suspension.

German Neubaufahrzeug
WW2. Early war medium. Hey, why not?

German Lorraine Schlepper with 10.5cm
WW2. French tractor converted by the Germans.

German Lorraine Schlepper with 7.5cm
WW2. French tractor converted by the Germans.

German Panzer I B 15cm sIG 33
WW2. The one with the tall superstructure.

German Marder III M
~~*WW2. The 7.5cm gun rear mounted in a modified 38t chassis.*~~ *SAID TO BE ON THE WAY FROM TAMIYA.*

German Bison M
~~*WW2. Pretty much the same thing as above, but with the sIG 33.*~~ *NOW COMING FROM ALAN.*

German Flakpanzer 38(t)
WW2. Similar to the above listed vehicles, but with the 2cm gun.

German Karlmörser
WW2. Sooner or later, right?

German Halftracks
WW2. Scratch the FAMO, but how about the SdKfz. 9, 10 and the Demag D7 (a new SdKfz. 7 wouldn't hurt either). Come on man—PLEASE! There's tons of variants, too.

German SdKfz. 251/20 UHU
WW2. The IR searchlight vehicle. This would make an outstanding Tamiya kit, don't you think?

German SdKfz. 251/21 Drilling
WW2. The triple flak mount. Tamiya?

German SdKfz. 251/22
WW2. With the Pak 40 75mm. Need we say more?

German PAK 43 8.8cm
WW2. The anti-tank gun with the cruciform base. Hey Dragon, how about the gun from the Nashorn?

German 15cm gun
WW2. The widely used heavy artillery piece (Dragon Hummel!). We'd also love to see the 17cm and the 21cm in plastic.

German 10.5cm
~~*WW2. We thought Tamiya would do this for sure after the Wespe. 3 variants.*~~ *ON DECK FROM AFV CLUB.*

German Hummel SPG
WW2. Sorry, but we still need a really good one. The chassis is the the bugger. Ditto on the Nashorn.

German SdKfz. 231 8-rad
WW2. Modified version of the original. Used mid to late war.

German SdKfz. 263 8-rad
WW2. We have the New Connection conversion, but how about some plastic?

German SdKfz. 247
WW2. Little armored 4x4 used by recon battalions.

German V3000 Ford truck
WW2. Similar versions were used by all the WW2 combatants.

German Bussing-Nag Truck
WW2. The basic truck, the AA version and the crane, too.

German "Büro-Anhanger"
WW2. The large boxy trailer hauled behind the Opel Blitz.

German Opel Blitz Bus
WW2. It seems like an Italeri natural.

German Mercedes-Benz G4
WW2. Mostly known as Hitler's six wheeled staff car, but also used as a regular heavy car in the field.

German le.gl.E.Pkw.
WW2. The little Stoewer or BMW light 4x4 cars. Several variants.

German Einheits-Diesel 1.5 ton 6x4 truck
WW2. Very common throughout the war, several versions fielded. There were also 1.5 tons from Krupp and Mercedes.

German Faun Typ L900
WW2. Very large tank transporter truck (it carried the tank on its back). Towed a big trailer, too.

German Mercedes-Benz L 4500
WW2. 4.5 ton cargo truck. Also used as a very unusual "Maultier" version.

German Hanomag Typ St 100
WW2. Developed for both the Luftwaffe and the Wehrmacht, it was used to haul long supply trains and bridging equipment.

German Schwimmwagen "Trippl"
WW2. Early contender to the VW throne. Used by the SS.

German VW Itlis
Modern Bundeswehr Jeep. Also used by other NATO members.

Hungarian Toldi
WW2. There are several variants, too.

Italian Fiat/Ansaldo AB40/41
WW2. 4 wheeled armored car, also used by the Germans in Italy.

Italian L3/35 tankette
WW2. We've got a few resin versions, but it's not a very big kit...

Italian Carro Armato L6/40
WW2. Another teeny thing, some served in Russia (scary).

Italian Semovente L40 47/32
WW2. Assault gun version of the L6/40. Also used by the Germans.

Polish Fiat 508/518 Mazur field car
WW2. One of the most common soft skins used by the pre-war Polish army. Over 10,000 produced. It seems like all the armor's getting done. Anyone?

Soviet 203mm gun
WW2. The one with the tracked carriage.

Soviet Stalinets Tractor
WW2. Soviet copy of the Caterpillar 60 tractor. Pulled the 203.

Soviet BTR-60
Post-war eight wheel armored car.

Soviet SA-2
Post-war mobile truck mounted SAM system.

Soviet BMD-1
Modern air-mobile infantry support vehicle.

Soviet ASU-85
Modern air-mobile tank destroyer.

Swedish S-Tank
Modern. That weird looking turretless jobby.

U.S. M1A1 Wrecking Truck
WW2. Terrific looking heavy wrecker made by Ward LaFrance.

U.S. M2/M2A1 Halftrack
WW2. The one with the shorter back end.

U.S. M3/M3A1 Halftracks
WW2. We're still waiting for contemporary plastic versions of this series. Help us Obi-wan Tamiya, you're our only hope...

U.S M3 Stuart
~~*WW2. We're still waiting for a contemporary plastic version of this, too. Throw in the M5 and M8 while you're at it. We're hearing a lot of rumors on this series, but nothing solid as of yet.*~~ *ON THE WAY FROM ACADEMY.*

U.S. M4 High Speed Tractor
WW2/Korea. Towed the Long Tom and used Sherman tracks. Think of all those lonely AFV Club kits.

U.S. M5 High Speed Tractor
WW2. Loosely based on the M3 in the suspension area. Hauled the 105, 155 and the 4.5 inch gun.

U.S. M6 High Speed Tractor
WW2/Korea. Successor to the M4, also towed the Long Tom and the 8-inch howitzer.

U.S. M10 ammo trailer
WW2. Pretty numerous on all fronts and commonly seen with the M7 Priest and the M8 HMC.

U.S. M19 Motor Carriage
Korea. Dual 40mm mounted on the Chaffee chassis.

U.S. M23 8-ton 4-wheel ammo trailer
WW2. Weird looking, but pulled along with every Long Tom.

U.S. M29 Weasel
WW2. The Monogram kit was a looooong time ago. Both variants.

U.S. M31 ARV
WW2. Recovery version based on the Lee/Grant series.

U.S. M37 Motor Carriage
Korea. 105mm mounted on the Chaffee chassis. Interestingly, this is the exact same gun that was mounted in the 105 Sherman.

U.S. M40 Motor Carriage
Korea. The Long Tom mounted on a "Easy Eight" type chassis.

U.S. M41 Walker Bulldog
~~Post war and Vietnam. It's high time for a new kit. The M42 Ductor would be cool, too.~~ BOTH OF THESE KITS ARE NOW ON AFV CLUB'S LIST.

U.S. M41 HMC
~~Developed at the end of WW2 and used in Korea. The 155mm howitzer on the M24 chassis.~~ AVAILABLE IN RESIN FROM CMK.

U.S. M43 Motor Carriage
Korea. The 8-inch howitzer mounted on a "Easy Eight" type chassis.

U.S. M44 SPG
1950's. One of a series of SPGs based on the M41 chassis. Also the M52. Used by other NATO nations– especially Germany.

U.S. M55 SPG
1950's. Big-ass SPG loosely based on the M46/M47 chassis. Used by other NATO nations—especially Germany.

U.S. DUKW-353
~~WW2. You know, the floater.~~ WE'RE HEARING STRONG RUMORS ON THIS, TOO. STAY TUNED FOR A STOCK NUMBER...

U.S. GMC 352
WW2. The short wheel base version. Hey Tamiya, come on!

U.S. 4-ton "Diamond T" 6x6 Truck
~~WW2. Cargo, dump and fabulous wrecker version.~~ AVAILABLE THROUGH ROY MODELS AND ANNOUNCED BY ACCURATE ARMOUR IN RESIN.

U.S. Mack NO 7.5 ton truck
WW2. Towed the 8-inch howitzer. Huge and just plain cool.

U.S. 240mm Howitzer
WW2. Widely used, but rarely photographed.

U.S. 75mm Field Howitzer
WW2. Also known as the "Pack" gun. Remember the old Tamiya metal one?

U.S. Staghound T17E1
WW2. U.S. built 4-wheel armored car almost exclusively used by the Brits.

U.S. LVT Series
WW2 & Korea. The whole series please: LVT-2; LVT (A)-2; ~~LVT 4; LVT (A) 1~~; LVT (A)-4; LVT (A)-5 and LVT (A)-5 modified. ITALERI'S CRANKIN' THEM OUT AND TRAX IS DOING CONVERSIONS.

U.S. Ontos
Post-war and Vietnam anti-tank tractor.

U.S. V-100
Post-war and Vietnam 4-wheeled armored car fielded in several different versions.

U.S. M422 "Mighty Mite"
Post-war miniature version of the Jeep.

U.S. M992A2
Modern NATO. The artillery ammunition carrier based on the M109. Hey Italeri!

U.S. M715 Jeep 1-1/4-ton cargo truck
Modern and widely used truck. Saw use in Vietnam.

U.S. M561 Gamma Goat
Modern and weirdo six wheeled cargo truck.

Resin Kits

Belgian T-13 tank
WW2. Early war Belgian mini tank. There is a SPG version, too.

German Geschützwagen III/IV (Sf)
WW2. Similar to the Grasshopper, with the 105mm gun plopped into the superstructure. The Brits still have one somewhere.

German Praga T6-SS tractor
WW2. Used the same tracks as the 38t series.

German Panzer III/IV hybrid
WW2. Also in the plastic list. Used an interleaved suspension.

German Mercedes-Benz L 4500
~~WW2. 4.5 ton truck. Also used as a very unusual "Maultier" version, using both purpose designed and Panzer II running gear.~~ WHEELED VERSION ON THE WAY FROM WESPE.

German Mercedes Unimog U 900 truck
Post war NATO. Also used extensively by the U.S. Army and Marines in a variety of interesting configurations.

German Heavy transport trailer
WW2. Actually used to move heavy railroad equipment, but also used to move the super heavy tanks and the Karl Mörser.

Soviet KRUG long track SA-4 radar
Post war. Lengthened version of the AT-T tractor with a large radar unit on top.

Soviet 2S7 203mm SPG
Post war. Enormous "nuclear" self-propelled artillery piece.

Soviet AT-T tractor
Post war. Basically a big truck loosely based on the T-55 chassis.

U.S. M114 armored recon vehicle
Post war. Cousin to the M113. Also used by the ARVN.

U.S. M6 or M6A1 Heavy Tanks
WW2. Actually standardized in 1942, but never deployed.

U.S. M6 High Speed Tractor
WW2/Korea. Also towed the Long Tom and the 8-inch howitzer.

U.S. M19 Diamond-T Tank Transporter
~~WW2. The Diamond T. Once there were two kits, now none.~~ SCALE LINE FROM THE NETHERLANDS HAS A FULL KIT.

U.S. M22 Locust
~~WW2. Wacky airborne tank.~~ ANNOUNCED FROM COMMANDER.

U.S. M23 8-ton 4-wheel ammo trailer
~~WW2. Weird looking, but pulled along with every Long Tom.~~ ANNOUNCED FROM PSP.

U.S. FMTV Truck Series
Modern cab over trucks. Widely used everywhere today.

U.S. OPFOR Sheridan
Modern. Hey Jaguar, what do you think?

U.S. Quickway crane and White truck
WW2. Awesome truck and crane combo also includes a trailer.

U.S. 4-ton "Diamond T" 6x6 Truck
~~WW2. Cargo, dump and fabulous wrecker version.~~ AVAILABLE THROUGH ROY MODELS IN RESIN AND ANNOUNCED BY ACCURATE ARMOUR.

U.S. Staff Cars
WW2. Maybe the Ford and the Packard types?

U.S. 240mm Howitzer
WW2. Widely used, but rarely photographed.

U.S. "Mighty Mite"
Post-war miniature version of the Jeep.

U.S. M561 Gamma Goat
Modern and weirdo six wheeled cargo truck.

U.S. M76 Otter
Modern tracked amphibian. Used by the Marines in Vietnam.

Conversions, Updates & Accessories

British Churchill-early variants
WW2. Its seems a natural thing for the Tamiya kit.

German 15cm Gun conversion
WW2. How about this: a conversion set for the older DML Hummel kit? The carriage and the limber. While you're at it, do the same thing for the Nashorn. Actually, that would be easier, because there's no limber.

German Ballistics Measuring Vehicle
WW2. Based on the 8-rad armored car. For the Tamiya kit.

German update set for the sWS
WW2. It sure could use it.

German Steyr Fire Tender
WW2. Conversion for the Tamiya kit.

German Panzer II Interior and Engine set
WW2. For the Alan/DML kit.

German Panzer I Interior and Engine set
WW2. For the Italeri kit.

German Panzer IV L/48 or L/70 Interior set
WW2. For the DML kits.

German Panzer III E through H Update and Detail set
WW2. For any of the DML kits.

German Panzer IV G conversion
WW2. Not too difficult. For the Tamiya H or J kits.

German Mercedes-Benz 1500 A
WW2. Conversion for the Tamiya Steyr kit. Basically the same body work with front end differences. Command car, too!

German 38(t)
WW2. OK, there are already plastic kits of this. But how about a conversion for the new Tamiya Marder that turns it back into a 38(t)? The real-life conversion was fairly basic, so getting it back to a tank is just an upper hull and a turret. This would be an opportunity to do the variants that have never been done in plastic. While you're at it, do a field piece conversion for the Russian gun at the same time!

German FAMO stuff
WW2. Tamiya appears to be done with its FAMO run, so what about the armored flak version (listed from Armoured Brigade, but never released), the artillery version, ~~the Bilstein crane version and the version with the giant 9-ton crane~~? The Nuts & Bolts booklet is the perfect starting point. CRANES AVAILABLE FROM BOTH CALIBRE 35 AND TIGER MODEL DESIGNS.

German Fox NBC Vehicle
Modern. Conversion for the Revell of Germany 6 x 6 armored car.

German Leopard 2A4 conversion
Modern. For the fabulous new Tamiya Leopard 2 A5. Real simple; just a turret and some other bits.

German Büffel ARV
Modern. Another conversion for the terrific Tamiya kit. Admittedly, a ton of work, but it's a real cool vehicle.

Soviet SCUD A
Post-war. Possibly based around one of the JS kits now in production.

Soviet Katyusha rocket launcher
WW2. For the Tamiya GMC 2.5 ton truck.

Soviet T-72 ARV
Modern. For the Tamiya kit. How about some other conversions for this great kit?

U.S. M19 Motor Carriage
~~Korea. Dual 40mm mounted on the Chaffee chassis. For Italeri.~~ NOW AVAILABLE FROM CMK, M41 HMC, TOO!.

U.S. M27 Bomb truck
WW2. Basically a GMC 353 with a dolly for bombs on the back. Conversion for the Tamiya kit.

U.S. M37 Motor Carriage
Korea. 105mm mounted on the Chaffee chassis. For Italeri.

U.S. M39 Utility Vehicle
WW2/Korea. Basically a turretless M18 with a slightly altered interior. Conversion for either the Academy or the AFV Club kit.

U.S. M35A3 Truck
Modern. The most modern version based around the AFV Club kit. Tires, body work and a few other doo-dads would do it.

U.S. Mk 48 Logistical Vehicle System
Modern Marine Corps and Army tractor version of the Oshkosh truck used as a trailer hauler. Might be possible to convert it from the Italeri kit.

U.S. Oshkosh M1070 8x8 truck
~~Awesome modern tank hauler used in conjunction with the M100 trailer. The ultimate Dragon Wagon.~~ ON THE WAY FROM ACCURATE ARMOUR!

U.S. M74 Recovery Vehicle
Post-war conversion of the M4A3E8. More modern version of the M32. Also used extensively by the Bundeswehr.

U.S. M3 half-track truck cab
WW2. With sheet steel cab and cargo bed. Used early in the war.

U.S. early Jeep conversions
WW2. Bantam or Ford GP. For the new Tamiya kit.

U.S. Chevrolet 1.5-ton Truck
WW2. Remember the Tamiya LRDG? That actually started out life as a cargo truck. If somebody copied the Italeri deuce and a half metal cab body and stuck in a nicely sculpted tarp for the back, they'd be in business.

U.S. GMC 352 conversion
WW2. Short wheel base version. For the Tamiya 2.5 ton truck. it's just a new, shortened bed and chassis with the spare tire holders.

U.S. GMC conversions
WW2. Cab over engine, van version, you name it, there were a billion things done to the WW2 GMC truck. Azimut did many of them for the older Italeri kit, but they're impossible to find in the U.S. and we now have the much newer Tamiya kit to work with. DUMP TRUCK CONVERSION AVAILABLE FROM RESICAST.

U.S. M26A1 Dragon Wagon Soft Cab conversion
WW2 & Post-war. Easy, really, when you think about it.

U.S. alternate pattern tires
WW2 & Post-war. There were several types. Check out pictures of the Dragon Wagon or Long Tom in combat.

U.S. M15A1/A2 Fruehauf trailer conversion
WW2 & Post-war. Stupid easy. Just two pieces of resin for the sides, the new ramps and a few other bits. Essential for attaching that extra trailer you might have to the M123 Mack tractor for a Vietnam scene or for use with the soft cab tractor.

U.S. Sherman comprehensive update set
WW2. Including everything like tail lights, tools, headlight guards, hatch details, etc. Partial sets are available, but nothing completely comprehensive.

U.S. Tank Engine Set
Similar to what Tamiya did for the German heavy tanks in plastic. Different radials for the Shermans, LVT's and Stuarts. The Ford G8, as well.

Soft Tops
More soft tops for all the cool new kits that are now available. We're talking about nicely sculpted resin replacements for the plain-Jane plastic parts. There are a few out there and some very expensive imports, but how about getting a line going? The Jeep, Dodge, FAMO, 8-ton, Kübel, Schwimmwagen, Steyr and ~~2.5 ton GMC~~ all spring to mind. GMC AND MANY NEW SOFT TOPS ARE ON THE WAY FROM TRAX—AND THEY'RE REALLY NICE, TOO.

PANZERTRACTS

attractions in the Panzer Tracts book series.

by Thomas L. Jentz

Comparison of Details on Panzerkampfwagen I Turrets and Superstructures

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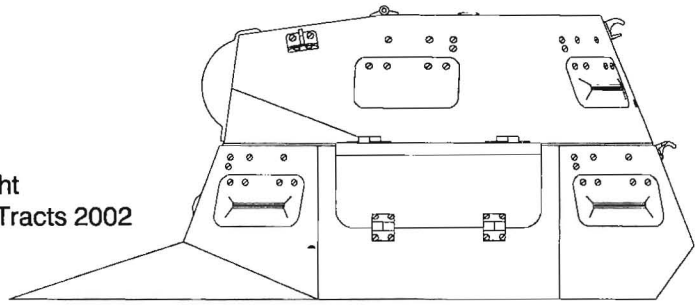

Versuchsaufbau designed by Daimler-Benz

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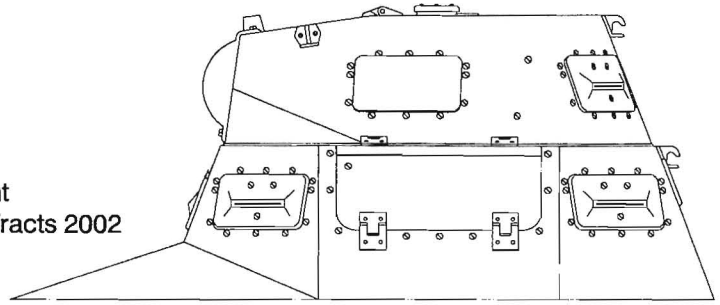

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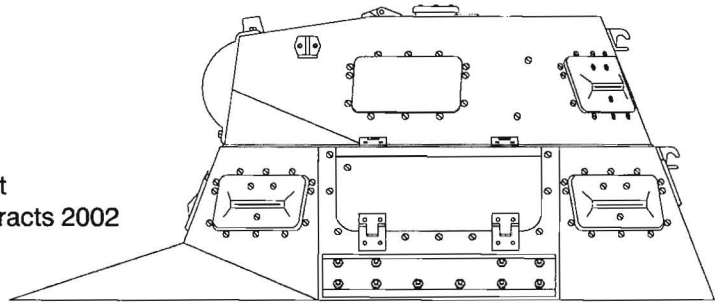

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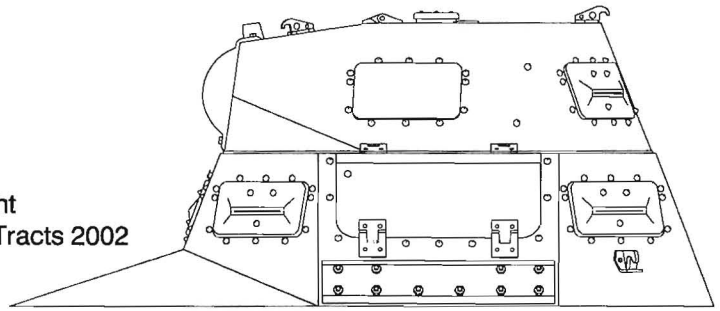

Panzerkampfwagen I Ausf.B (5.Serie/La.S.)

2.000 meters

All of the differences between models and authorized modifications are illustrated in photographs and accurate scale prints in the recently released Panzer Tracts 1-1 from Panzer Tracts, P.O.Box 334, Boyds, MD 20841, email panzertracts@aol.com, tel/fax (301)972-2504.

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ABER 1/35

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ab35100	Marder III - Basic Set	$18.35
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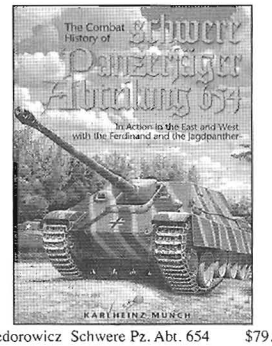
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ADV/Azimut 1/72

az72001	Renault VAB 4x4 VTT	$13.60
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Armor Research Accessories 1/35

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arc1003	Tiger I Engine Screens	$6.00
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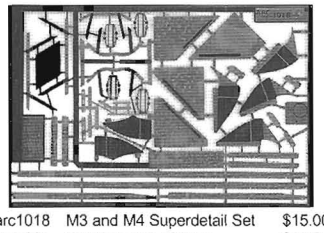

arc1018	M3 and M4 Superdetail Set	$15.00
arc5001	M4 Sherman 105mm	$20.00
arc5009	Road Wheels for Panther	$10.00

Calibre 35 1/35

cn35001	Crane for FAMO (SdKfz.9/1)	$35.70

Des Kits 1/35

des35075	Zeiss Lunette	$6.65
des35077	Flak 37 Covered	$42.70
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Italeri 1/35

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Sol 1/16

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Sol 1/35

sl3038	Swedish S Tank	F $65.60
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Sol 1/48

sl3102	M.A.S.H. Jeep	F $28.85
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Tamiya 1/16

tam56016	M26 Pershing T26E3 RC	$749.25

Tamiya 1/35

tam30027	US Army M-42 Duster	$27.00
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Verlinden Productions 1/35

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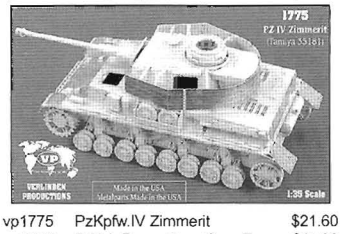

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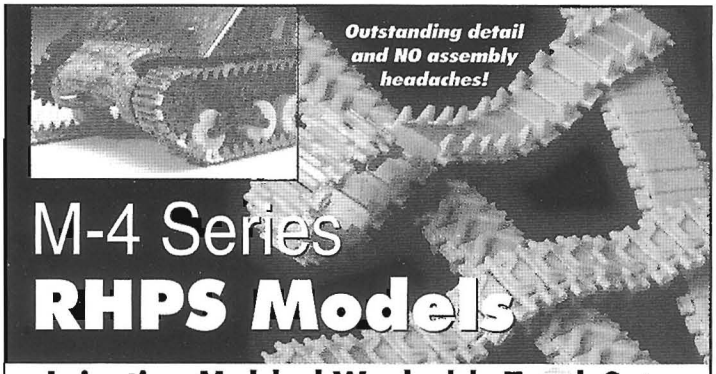

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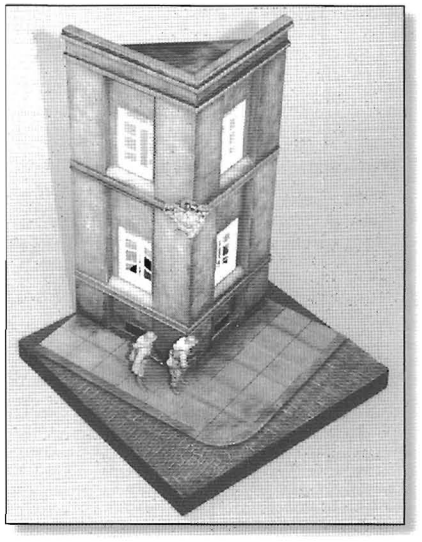

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Japanese SPGs Pt. 1

Me So Ho-Ni

Building the Tamiya Type 1 75mm 'Ho-Ni' I SP Gun

Up until recently, with the exception of a few excellent kits from Tamiya, there have been virtually no kits available of Japanese armor from WWII. Now thanks to FineMolds and a few Japanese cottage industry efforts like Yellow Cat, Gum-Ka and Pit-Road, a number of the armor vehicles are now beginning to show up on hobby shop shelves in the US. This article on the Tamiya Type 1 75mm 'Ho-Ni' self-propelled (SP) Gun is the first in a series on the various efforts the Japanese undertook to field a whole family of self-propelled guns, or as the Japanese often referred to them during World War II, "Gun Tanks." Other articles in this series will be appearing in subsequent issues of MMiR. Some of the SP Guns to be included in this series will be: Type 1 105mm "Ho-Ni" II, Type 2 75mm "Ho-I," Type 3 75mm "Ho-Ni" III, Type 4 150mm "Ho-Ro," the short barrel 120mm Gun Tank and even one on the experimental twin barreled 20mm SP AA Gun "So-Ki." All of these guns are currently available in either full kits or conversions. There is a possibility that one or more additional SP Gun kits may be released in the near future and, if so, they will also be included in this series.

Background

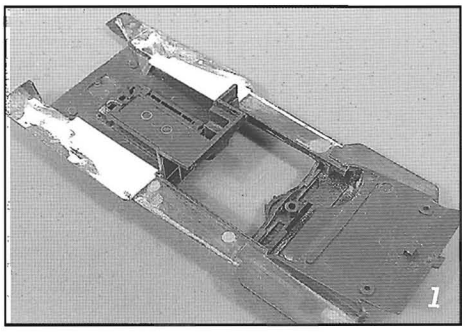
As the war progressed in the Pacific the Japanese found themselves being outgunned by the American armor. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the Japanese did not have the capability to develop and produce in any meaningful numbers more modern and up-gunned tanks. To satisfy this requirement, the Japanese took some of their Type 97 medium tank chassis and converted them to a series of self-propelled guns. In 1942, the first of these upgrades to be produced was the Type 1 'Ho-Ni,' mounting a 75mm gun. These self-propelled guns were considered to be a stopgap and consequently were only produced in limited numbers. Approximately 128 of the Ho-Ni were produced. This includes some of the 'Ho-Ni' II, which was the same vehicle with a 105mm gun.

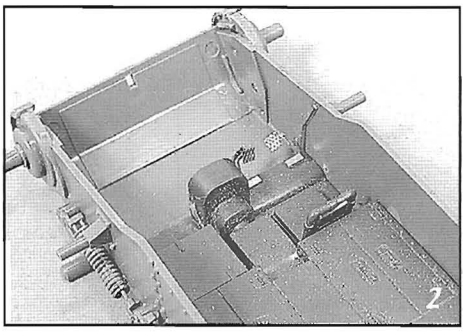
Although the Japanese called these "Gun Tanks," they were in fact true self-propelled guns. Despite their appearance, they had no real direct fire capability and were only deployed as indirect fire artillery. The gun used was a modified Type 90 (1930) 75mm anti-tank medium velocity gun that was originally used in the Type 3 'Chi-Nu' Medium Tank. The performance of this field gun was reportedly comparable to that of the 75mm gun fitted in the American Sherman tanks at the time.

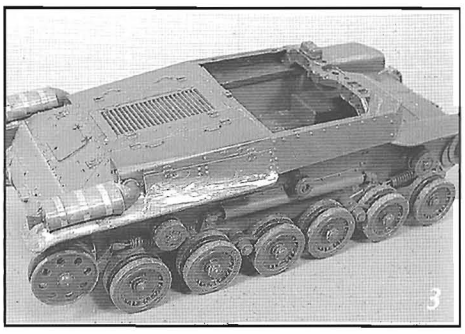
The Type 1 'Ho-Ni' I used the late Type 97 tank chassis, which had the engine vents moved from the top of the engine deck to underneath it. The only real modification made to the chassis was a simple shield to replace the Type 97 turret. There was a crew of five and it used a V-12 diesel engine with a top speed of 38 kph. The Type 1 first saw action in the Philippines in 1944 and was also used in Burma. Fortunately (for some of us), there is a surviving example rusting away at the U.S. Army Ordnance Museum at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland.

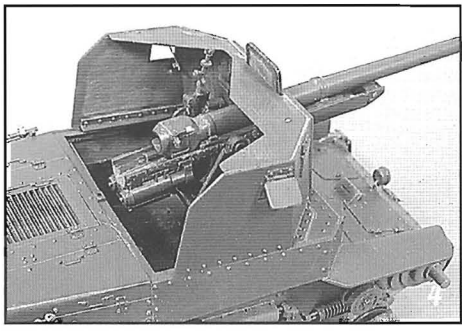
An oldie but goodie

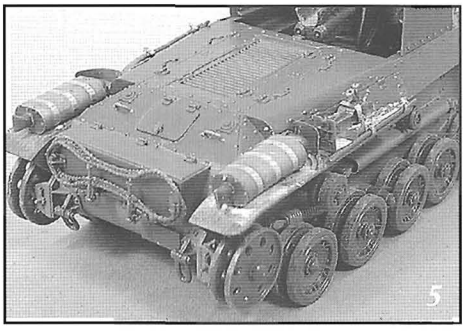
The Tamiya kit is an old kit, but it exhibits a lot of good detail. Like a lot of Tamiya kits, it seems to disappear from hobby store shelves for a couple of years, then is reissued. It is made of the usual olive green plastic and includes rubber band tracks and decals. Two crew figures are included but they are only fair quality. I used the Eduard photo-etch set made for this kit and the ModelKasten workable tracks. I also used shells and rounds from a Tamiya brass set designed for the Panzer IV 75mm gun, but they were close enough to the Japanese ammunition to look reasonable.

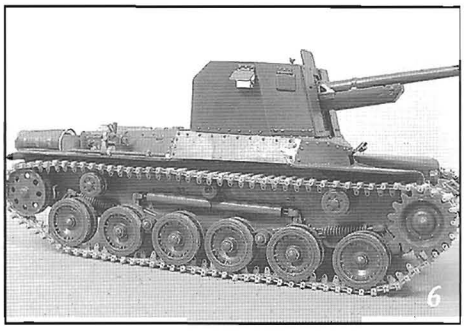


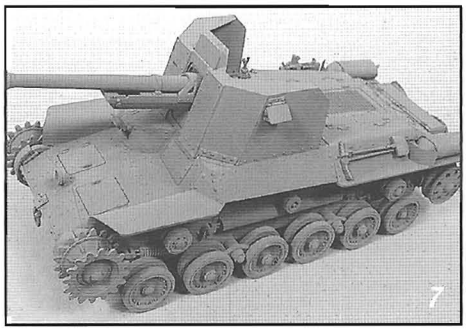




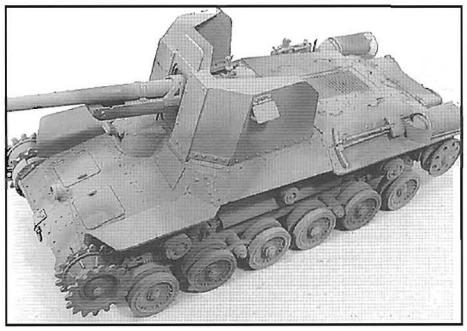


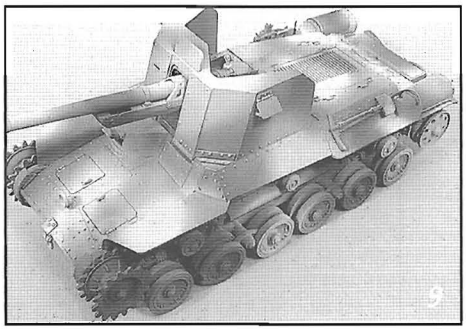


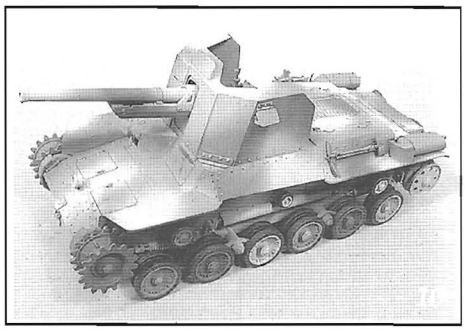




1. These sponsons need to be filled so I used sheet styrene. There actually should be some vents on the bottom, as some of the conversion kits include. There are a number of holes in the rear fender for placement of tools and mufflers. I have chosen to fill these since they still show after construction is complete. 2. The driver's compartment is pretty bare but the Eduard photo-etch set does help. The steering levers are rather thin but once everything is in place it is very difficult to see any of the detail. 3. The hull top has been glued on with only minor filling needed. The basic mufflers are also complete using the kit's mufflers front and back pieces. I think this is a required fix since the kit muffler has the screen molded onto it. 4. The shield and gun are both glued in. The gun's mounting is rather loose and it tends to flop around unless glued to its pedestal. I knew I was going to use the kit's figure that is opening the breech, so I glued it at the appropriate angle to match his hand. 5. The Eduard photo-etch set provides a number of pieces to 'fix up' the rear but I have found after using them several times that they do not add anything and are a lot of work. The kit pieces, including the tow cable look fine. 6. The ModelKasten workable tracks for the Type 97 are really nice but very delicate. The horns are separate so they take a little longer to assemble. Additionally, the pins need to be pushed in after gluing so the recess hole is visible. 7. The first coat of paint is the Tamiya XF-26 deep green. I also use this coat to







check for flaws that need correcting. I know this might be heresy but I don't believe in using a primer. I have never seen any purpose and it just puts another coat of paint on a model to hide detail. 8. The next step in camouflage is painting on Tamiya XF-9 hull red. 9. The last camouflage color is Tamiya XF-60 dark yellow. Notice I left the screens on for the camouflage paint but I removed them to paint the mufflers underneath. 10. I now painted the details, like the roadwheels, mufflers and tools.

Fill those sponsons please, Mr. Tamiya

I started with the hull, which required fillers underneath the sponsons. I made these fillers out of sheet styrene. I also puttied up all the holes in the rear fenders since they show from the bottom even after the kit is complete. There is a basic interior, including a driver's seat and some boxes, which I glued into the hull. I added the Eduard photo-etch pedals and steering columns for detail. I did not bother with anything else since once the gun shield is in place and crew figures are present you cannot see much anyway. I glued the suspension parts on the hull sides. I also added the Eduard photo-etch screens on the rear firewall in the troop compartment. The Eduard instructions say to cut out the areas before gluing the screens on, but I sometimes get lazy, so I just glued them over the old screens and they looked fine. Anyway, once the kit is complete you really cannot see the screens because of the shield being in the way. It was now time to glue the hull top onto the bottom. After gluing the top and bottom together there was some minor filling required around the seams between the halves.

The roadwheels and bogies were cleaned up then assembled. I sanded off the ridges on the roadwheels after they were assembled using an emery board. The bogies and return rollers were then glued on, except the idler and drive sprockets, which I left off until the tracks were assembled.

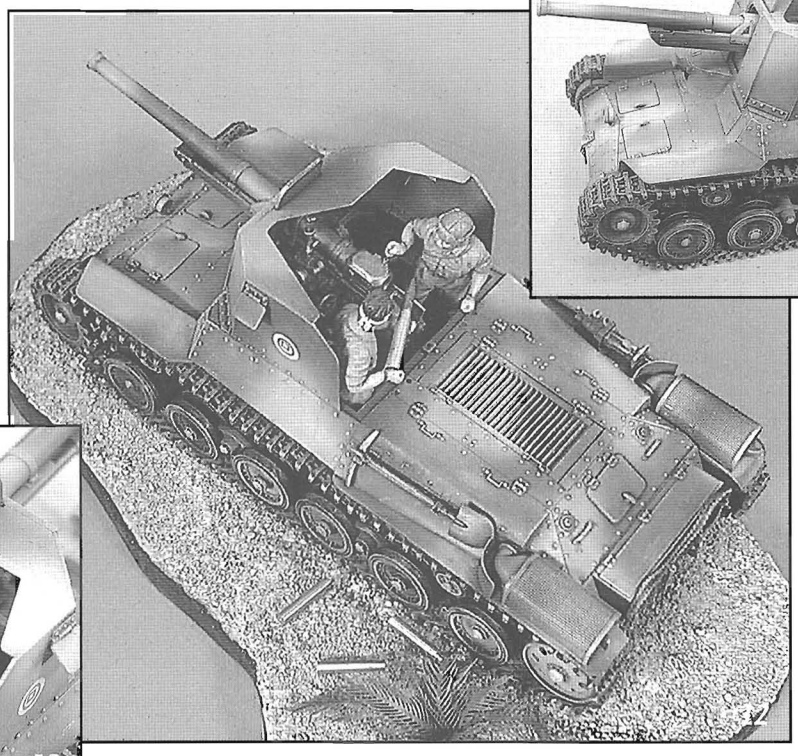
Now for the track

I used the ModelKasten workable tracks for this kit. They are rather time consuming to assemble since the center guide horn is separate, but the final results are well worth it. ModelKasten provides the usual jig for assembly. One trick is that as soon as you glue in the connecting pin, you need to press it in with a drill bit mounted in a pin vise but put in backwards. This gives plenty of control to gently push the pin in so there is a recess at the end of the track link. In the real link there is a bolt that goes in there and it leaves a hole exposed. Like all ModelKasten tracks, these are very fragile so great care must be taken or they will break apart. Once I finished these tracks I laid them aside until after painting.

Mufflers and tools

I did use as much of the Eduard photo-etch set as possible, including mufflers, muffler covers, shovel and pick, and jack mounts. I also did not add anything to the gun itself, but just built it straight

11. The decals, tracks, and muffler screen have been added and the weathering process has been started with a wash, then dry brushing with oil paints. 12. The gun is now complete, ready for the crew and base. 13. The two crewmembers are from the kit, but I replaced their heads with a couple of Verlinden ones. I like the "Bonzai" headband since it adds a little color. The breech and other metal parts were dry brushed with Rub-n-Buff silver. 14. The base was made from sheet Styrofoam you can buy in any good model railroad hobby shop. I covered the Styrofoam with a mixture of Celluclay, tile grout colored with acrylic paints. This was then sprinkled with various sizes of gravel. 15. The edge of the base was painted with Tamiya gloss black. 16. The plant came from a Verlinden photo-etch set, which I first painted dark green then glued in place. I then gave it a wash and dry brushed it. The empty shell casings are from a Tamiya German 75mm, since the kit shells are in plastic and look the same anyway.



from the box. I did try to use the photo-etch brass, part 6, that goes on top of the gun where it goes through the shield. Unfortunately, this piece is way too thin and did not look right so I used the kit one instead. The more I build using after market kits the more discriminating I am about using something just because it is photo-etched.

The mufflers are one area that requires reworking. As far as I am concerned this is one step that has to be fixed and the main reason to buy the Eduard set. There is a Show Modelling photo-etch set for the Type 97, but it only provides a screen for the muffler and not the muffler itself, while the Eduard set has everything you need. The only parts that you use from the kit are the intake and exhaust pieces. I did not attach the screens until after I had painted the vehicle so I could paint and weather the muffler underneath.

I glued the gun on the chassis since I did not want it to flop around because it is a very loose fit. I also glued it at a fixed elevation to match the crew figure's hand (he is supposed to be opening the breech). I assembled the superstructure after removing several mold release marks on the inside. I also used the photo-etch braces for the vision flaps. I now glued the superstructure in place.

Although Eduard provides a number of pieces for the rear of the chassis, such as mounting hardware for the tow cable, I have found it doesn't really look any better after you use it and it is a lot of work. I did hollow out the rear taillight holder to allow an MV lens to be added after painting. I also mounted the headlight on the front glacis plate and added thin solder wire to simulate the electrical lead.

Doing camouflage

After washing the vehicle, I sprayed it with Tamiya XF-26 deep green as a base coat. I then sprayed a camouflage pattern using Tamiya's XF-9 hull red and XF-60 dark yellow. I sprayed the tracks with Polly Scale Panzer red brown. I also used the red brown on the mufflers and a few boxes inside the fighting compartment. I painted the roadwheel tire rims with Tamiya flat black and the tool handles with Vallejo medium flesh, then wood stain. The metal parts, such as shovel, ax head, and breech area were painted with Vallejo black gray.

I used kit decals, making it a tank from the 4th Platoon, 14th Tank Regiment, 4th Army Technical Laboratory. This is one of the Type 1's that was captured by the 37th Infantry Division in an attack on Northern Luzon Island, Philippines in June 1944. This is reported to be the same one on display at Aberdeen. Unfortunately, the decals are off registration a little but I went with them anyway. I first sprayed the areas to receive the decals with Tamiya clear gloss. Once the decals were on the vehicle I set them with Solvaset. I then lightly sprayed the whole model with Polly Scale satin clear.

I applied a thin wash of a mixture of black and burnt umber oil on the whole chassis. I applied a wash of thin black oil on the tracks. I then went over the whole vehicle using a pin wash of more of the black and burnt umber mix on bolts and panel

lines. I dry brushed the vehicle with a mixture of titanium white, sap green, and burnt umber oil paints. Lastly, I dry brushed the tracks, breech and tools with Rub-n-Buff silver. MV lenses were added for the headlight and taillight.

Furnishing a crew and scene

Although they are not great, I used the two figures from the Tamiya kit, but replaced their heads with two from the Verlinden Japanese WWII Tank Officer set. The Verlinden set comes with one figure and two heads, which means the heads are separate, so it was easy to cut off the heads of the Tamiya figures and drill out holes for the Verlinden heads.

The base was made from sheet Styrofoam that was cut with a hot wire tool. I then mixed tile grout and Celluclay along with some acrylic paints for color to form the base. I made a mound on one corner to add a plant. I sprinkled various sizes of gravel over the base while it was still wet. I then applied a wash of thinned black and burnt umber oil. Be careful here since the thinner will melt the Styrofoam if too much is used. I then added a Verlinden palm plant made of photo-etch. I first sprayed the leaves with Tamiya XF-26 deep green then stuck them in a hole in the mount top and pressed the leaves in. I dry brushed the base with titanium white, sap green and yellow ochre oil paint. I painted the edge of the base with Tamiya F-1 black gloss paint.

Results

This was not too difficult a kit to build. Considering how long it has been around, it is really a good kit. I probably spent more time on the tracks than anything else. The photo-etch is absolutely necessary for the mufflers and screens. I probably spend about 40 hours on the construction and painting.

—Jim Hensley

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ModelKasten Type 97 tracks workable. Kit number SK-31. Suggested retail price $33.31.
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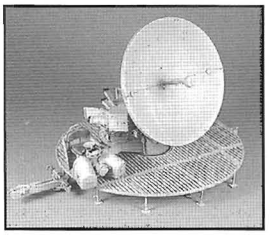
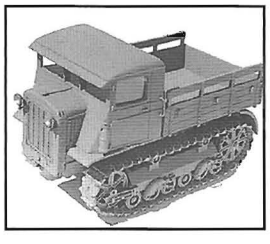
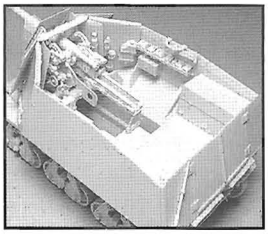

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Ugly DUKWling

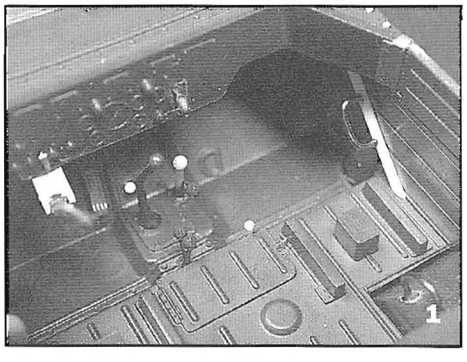
Jeep meets DUKW, and a redheaded stepchild is born

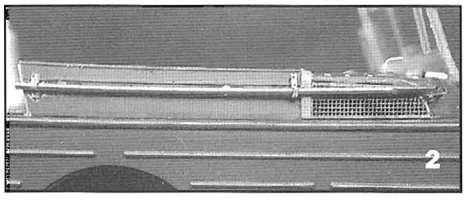
In 1940, the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC) developed the specs for a General Purpose amphibious (GPA) vehicle for transporting small numbers of personnel and supplies from ship to shore. Marmon-Herrington (assisted by the New York yacht firm of Sparkman & Stevens) and Ford Motor Company created designs based on the 1/4-ton Jeep GP chassis. Both prototypes were completed by spring 1942, but Ford received the government contract. Many design features were copied from the larger DUKW that was undergoing development at the same time. The Sea Jeep (or Seep, which instantly became an inside joke) was quickly rushed into production without the extensive testing enjoyed by the Jeep and other vehicles. After the GPA entered service, valuable production time was eaten up as it repeatedly returned to the drawing board to correct its design flaws. The engines easily overheated on land and sea and cargo capability was extremely limited. It was too heavy on land, but with insufficient armor to withstand enemy fire. In the water, the GPA bobbed like a cork, easily foundered in moderate surf, and lacked enough power to fight stronger currents.

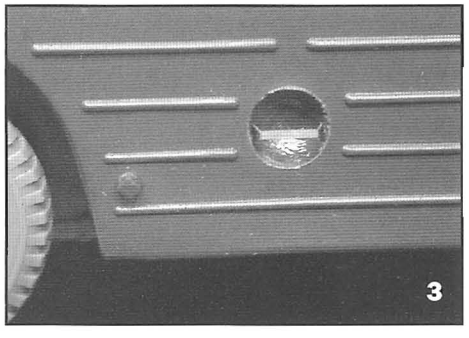
The 3,650-pound GPA was hard pressed to reach either its supposed water speed of 7 knots or its land speed of 50 miles per hour. A Second gear drove the propeller via a Power Take Off (PTO) mechanism linked to the transfer case and, unlike the Schwimmwagen, the GPA was capable of reverse speed. A capstan winch in the bow was a clever and valuable device, enabling the crew to pull themselves onto soft beaches and up inclines. (Much of the operator's manual is devoted to using this winch in a jam.) The initial order called for 12,000 units but some sources believe as few as 5,000 or as many as 18,000 were actually manufactured. In a nutshell, the vehicle just wasn't needed. While the GPA played a prominent role in the Allied landings in Sicily, Italy, and even Normandy, it was labeled a failure by the U.S. military and the majority of GPAs were handed over to the Russians under the Lend-Lease Act.

The overview

Tamiya's version first came to us in 1974, and it still stands as the only 1/35 offering of the Ford GPA. The kit has been re-released several times in recent years but retains its all-Japanese instructions. It's another example of Tamiya's excellent early tooling, as the overall feel of the kit is spot on. The entire lower hull is molded in one piece and the fit is superb. Out of the box it could easily be assembled in an hour or two. But as with most older kits, the devil is in the details, and the GPA is greatly improved with a dose of etch and three tablespoons of scratchbuilt details. The kit depicts the standardized version; earlier vehicles are identified by







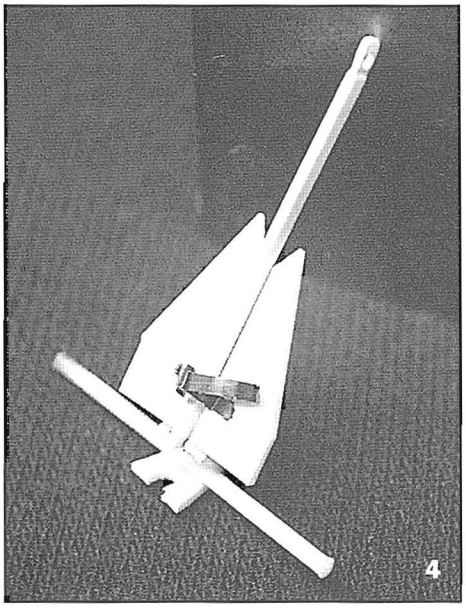
1. The passenger interior side strut was added from Evergreen half-round strip. 2. The boat hook with its new handle from brass rod, plus lead foil hangers. Front bracket by Eduard. 3. The two side-steps and the front towing hook were ground out and replaced with Eduard etched parts. The cavities were smoothed with Tamiya Extra Thin Cement.

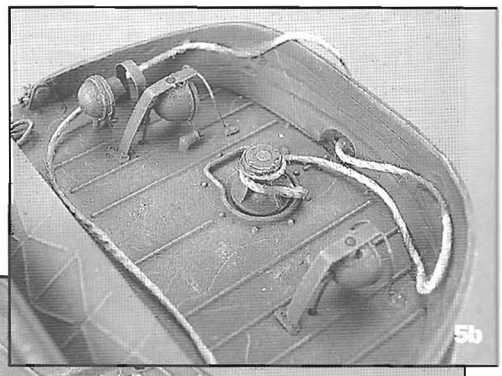
the lack of ribbing on the upper side walls, no lifting rings, spare tire mounted dead center on the rear deck, and no muffler guard.

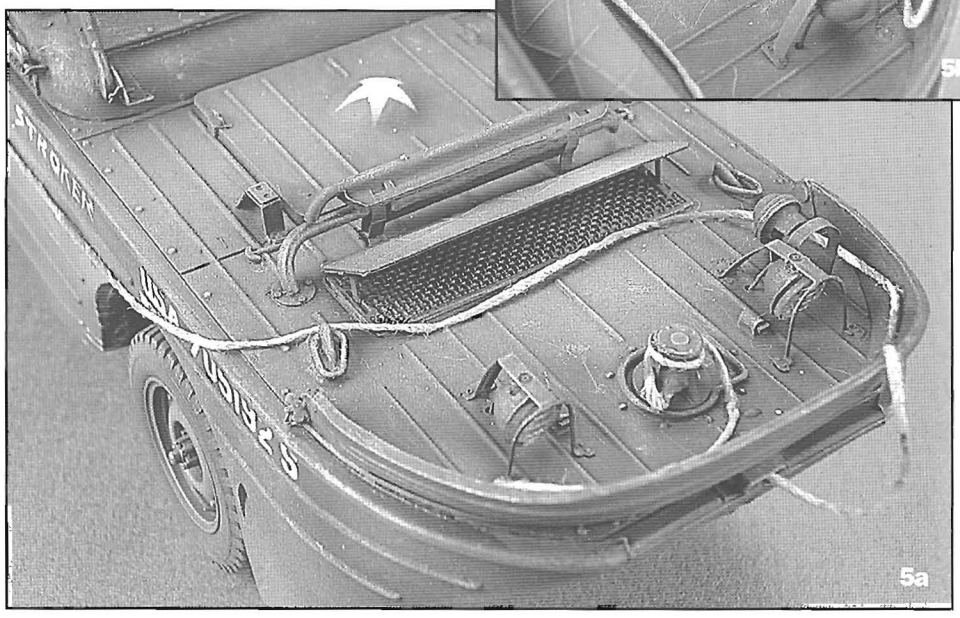
Raising your GPA

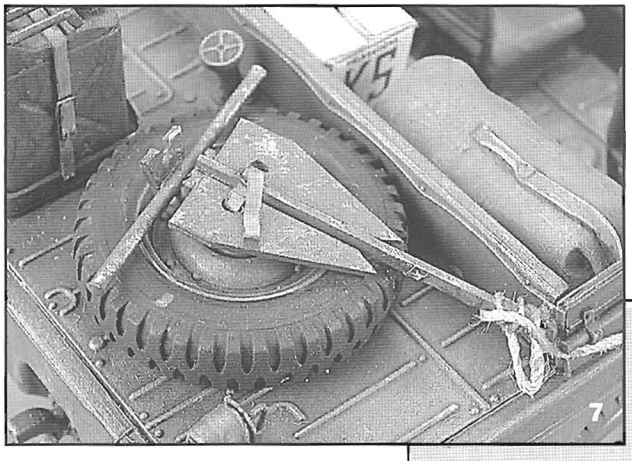
The first things to go were the kit wheels, replaced by much better versions found in Tamiya's Willys Jeep. Valve stems from brass wire were added and the hubs were mated to the axles after the axles were installed on the hull. The steps on each side and the identical towing mount on the front were ground out with a round Dremel bit, and the concave areas were coated with Tamiya Extra Thin Cement to smooth them out. Eduard pieces were then attached. Taillight depressions on the rear deck were filled with strip plastic and the lights were modified with Eduard mounts and wire. Lifting rings were added from copper wire and a new fuel spout added. Twin oval rings were made from strip brass and mounted on the rear lip; these served as stanchions and as rope guides for the rings. A resin fuel can from the parts box received an Eduard strap and a spare VP bracket from their Jeep update. Four etch bolt heads were added around the rear tow hook.

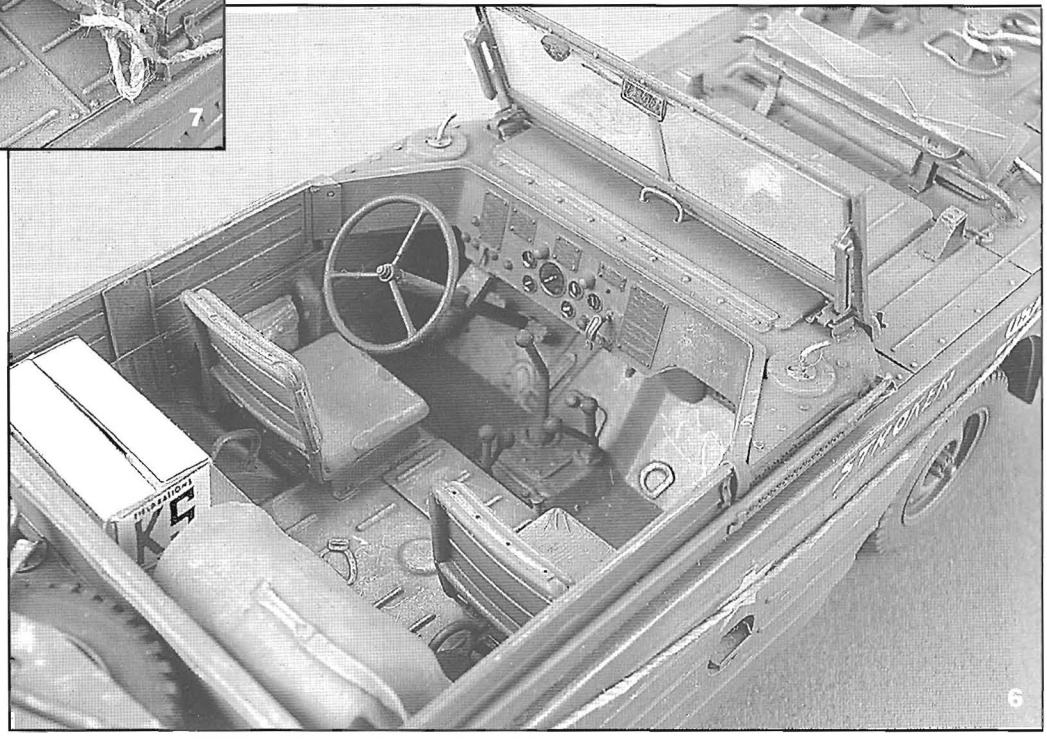
A healthy portion of detailing is found on the forward deck, so this piece was fully detailed prior to installation. All depressions for kit parts were filled with strip plastic. Elefant wing nuts were added to the engine hatch. Eduard parts include the windshield bumpers, muffler mounts, blackout and headlight guards, and cap for the capstan winch. The headlights were modified to properly hang from the guards and brass wire was added to each. Copper wire was again used for the two forward lifting rings. Eduard provides a complete front deck air intake with a truly gorgeous screen. The front and rear deck plates were then installed. The front cowling beneath the windshield was detailed with punched rivets for the side spray curtains (triangular canvas pieces which snapped to the cowling and windshield frame, available in the Eduard set but not used), plus Eduard air outlet screens and wire for the operating handles above. The windshield received Eduard brackets, opening levers on each





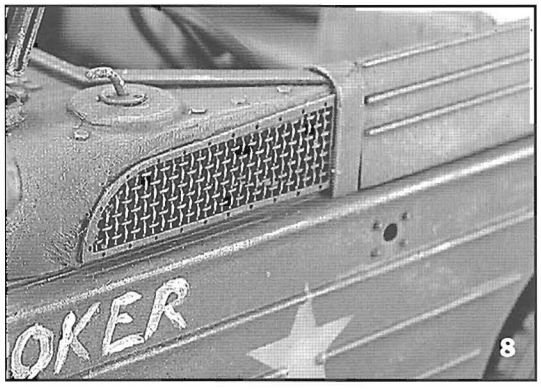


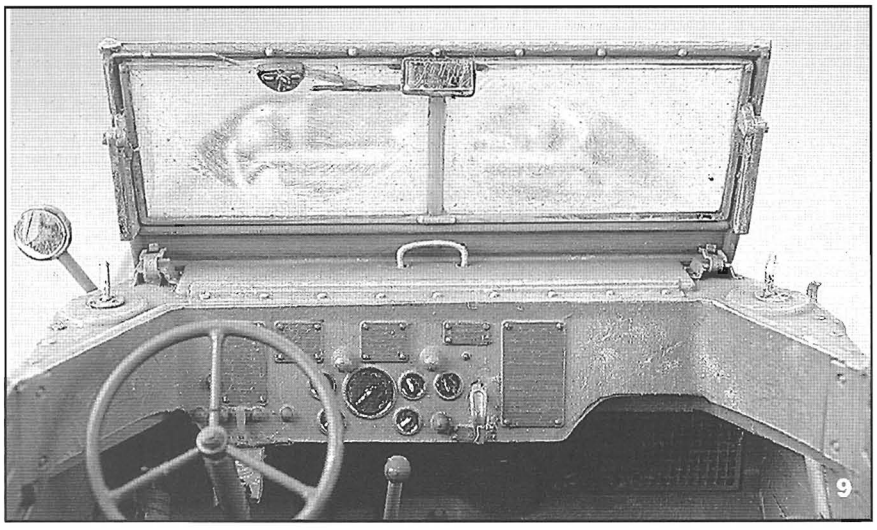


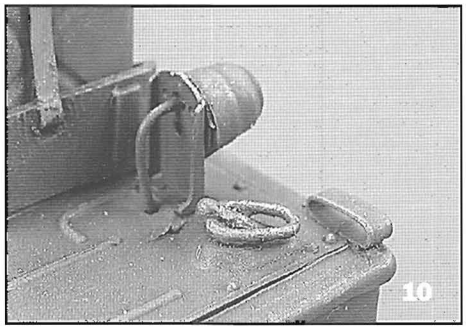


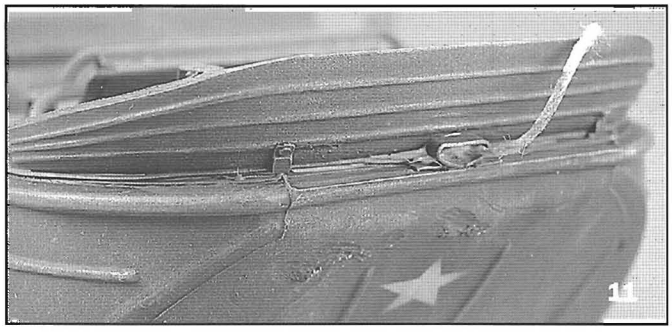
4. The scratchbuilt anchor—a cool accessory for a wheeled vehicle, eh? 5a, b. On the forward deck Eduard parts include, the windshield bumpers, muffler mounts, headlight guards and cap for the capstan winch. Note the front deck air intake with its amazing screen. 6. For the front seats, the lowers were mated with new uppers from the Tamiya Jeep. Eduard's interior sidewalls provide the necessary relief.

7. The rear deck features a hybrid aftermarket fuel can plus copper wire lifting rings and Eduard's fuel spout—oh, and the anchor! 8. More amazing etched screen on the hull sides. 9. The kit dashboard, with painted gauges filled with Testors Clear Parts Cement. The windshield









received Eduard's wiper motor detail plus opening levers and an upgraded side mirror from the Tamiya Jeep. 10. These oval rings (two on the stern and one on the bow) were made from strip brass. 11. The curved surf-shield on the nose—desperately crying out for an aftermarket replacement.

side from the Tamiya Jeep, and a rearview mirror from the parts box. Tamiya's Jeep also provided a new side mirror that was cut from its mount and repositioned. "Landing gouges" were added to the front of the vehicle with a motor tool.

I should digress here and explain the configuration of this vehicle. I decided to depict my GPA as if it had recently emerged from the water. To wit, the air intake on the front deck has been opened; the side spray curtains have been removed; but the surf shield is still folded into the forward position. (Plus, I thought this gave the vehicle a sportier look.) Water operations required the air outlets on each side to be closed by turning the curved handles above each side of the dash (this closed the internal vents), then the rectangular ventilator right on top of the dash would be opened.

The curved surf shield on the bow should have concave ribbing on the inside so three lines were lightly ground in with a motor tool. The open tips were cut off and replaced with punched plastic half-moons, then the Eduard mounts and bits of Aber chain were added. The lower lip was augmented with stretched sprue. The dash and rear seats were installed next. Eduard provides a replacement dash with printed gauges, but I liked the relief on the kit part and opted to paint the gauges instead. I used the kit's two upper sidewalls and added the interior sidewalls from Eduard (these are a most welcome and necessary element). The boat hook handle was replaced with brass rod and Eduard's forward bracket was used. The two hangers on the handle were fashioned from lead foil. A strut on the passenger interior was easily made from half-round Evergreen, and three interior grab handles were added from copper wire. Interior additions include a new bilge pump pipe to the driver's left; two upper seats from the Tamiya Jeep, with twelve snaps drilled into each; sheet plastic for the steering column brace; Eduard pedals; Tamiya Jeep extinguisher on the floor with Eduard bracket; and the deck air intake control lever by the driver's left knee.

Anchor news

The operator's manual is full of advice on how to use the anchor, which is absent from the kit. This was apparently a vital piece of gear for water operations and for use of the capstan winch. I've listed the link below that shows the original sketch for the anchor. The collapsible anchor was folded and strapped to a U-shaped auxiliary bracket mounted atop the spare tire. This assembly was scratchbuilt from strip and sheet plastic. The spare tire was taken from VP's Jeep update.

Chapter eight: Pat explores his inner geek

The painting process was simple and straightforward, since the only subassemblies were the wheels, seats, and anchor. The windshield panes were masked off, and then Tamiya TS-28 Olive Drab 2 spray lacquer was applied. The vehicle was then airbrushed with a mix of Tamiya acrylics (XF-58 Olive Green and XF-49 Khaki). Washes and metal wear came next. The stars were airbrushed using Eduard Express Masks (gotta love 'em) and kit decals. Self-adhesive chrome label material was used for the two mirrors. Canvas seat covers (yes, the cushions could be used as a flotation device—no kidding) and minor details were painted with Andrea acrylics. A VP duffel bag and Hudson & Allen box were added to the rear seat. To help demonstrate the anchor usage, I depicted the anchor still attached to its rope, with said rope deployed forward from the capstan winch.

Despite its many shortcomings and less than stellar record, the GPA is still a unique piece of history and great fun to build.

—Joe Porter

MMiR RECCE

Tamiya Ford G.P.A. Jeep U.S. Amphibian. Kit number 35043. Originally released in 1974 and back in the line from time to time. Still a one of a kind. Current retail price $13.00.

Eduard Ford G.P.A. Jeep Detail Set. Item number 35391. A fine etch set that includes printed gauges and Express Mask for painting. Replaces earlier item 35141. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price $19.99.

Tamiya Jeep Willys MB. Kit number 35219. Treat your GPA to better wheels and tires, seats, steering wheel and other goodies from their upgraded Jeep. Retail price $18.50.

References

http://www.eese.bee.qut.edu.au/QUAV/Rod/cj2a/1943gpa/main.html – Rod Walker's website is a haven for all things GPA. Includes tons of wartime photos, plus restored vehicles, various specs, and great links.

http://www.filmprops.nl/produkten/fordoper.man.htm – This is where you'll find the complete Ford Motor Company Operator's Instruction Manual for the GPA. Simply fabulous.

http://www.eese.bee.qut.edu.au/QUAV/Rod/cj2a/1943gpa/technical/ANCHOR.JPG – Deep inside Rod Walker's website you'll find the original sketch for the elusive GPA anchor.

Collectors interested in purchasing this finished piece can contact jporter@cosmicbovine.com.

MEN & MACHINES IN VIETNAM

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輝煌

Panther-monium

So you want to build a Panther, huh? I don't see why. We've got three, count 'em, three different kits from Tamiya and three kits from Italeri. So why a new kit? Aren't six kits enough? Well, how do I put this delicately? Um... the Italeri kits were not quite up to the standards that most of us serious geeks prefer. The main problems were ones of accuracy. Several key dimensions were seriously off and the level of detail was not what we generally prefer. Those kits weren't all that bad for their day (1994), but I have always hoped that someone else would take a crack at the early Panthers. After years of rumors that another company would do an A or D, that "someone" turned out to be DML.

By the way, let me digress here for a moment and ask: have you been keeping track of DML lately? Once upon a time they were releasing kits right and left, so fast perhaps, that we never had a chance to really absorb them properly. The releases have slowed in recent years to a trickle when compared to the earlier schedule. But, have you taken a really good look at their last four kits? The continuing series on the 250 have been spot-on and the Elephant and Ferdinand were just terrific. Great detail, super accurate and relatively easy to build. If that doesn't do it for you, I don't know what will.

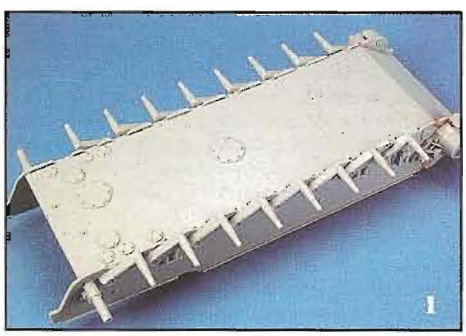
Enter the... Panther?

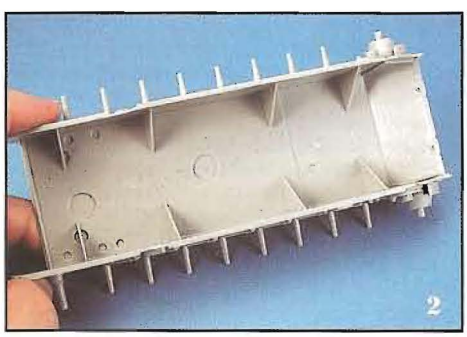
It was with a pretty cheery outlook on life that I grabbed this kit from its shipping box and tore off the outer plastic. The first thing I noticed (it was hard to miss) was the fabulous Volstad artwork that is splashed from corner to corner on the box top. Looking at the artwork, I saw the rectangular flap for the MG port, the large opening for the driver's visor and the cast cupola. Now, in the dark days B.J. (before Jentz), we used to think of this as a late D. However, there is some serious research going on here. Remember the rule: if you see that cast cupola, it's an ausf. A. The change that created the ausf. A was the redesign of the turret. Most of the changes were internal, but the most significant external changes were the altered shape of the gun mantlet, the addition of a loader's periscope and the new cast cupola. These new turrets were introduced into the production run in September of 1943, but the hulls remained identical to the ausf. D with the exception of the roadwheels, which now contained double the number of rim bolts.

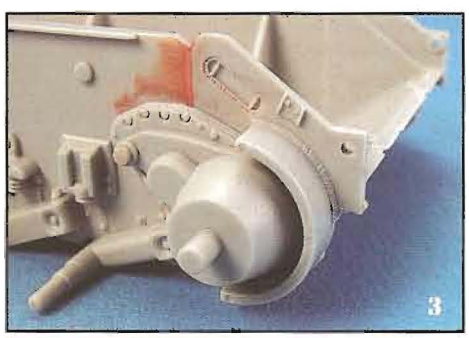
The kit is composed of nine sprues and the hull casting, with four of those sprues devoted to the road wheels and tracks. There are also two sheets of thin styrene stock with the side skirts die-cut right in. Starting to sound interesting?

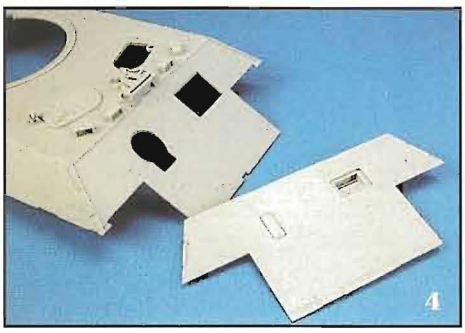
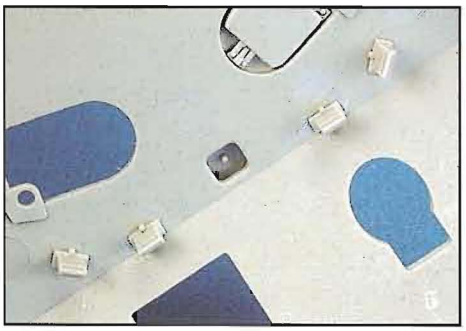
The instructions are of the new type that DML has fielded in its last few kits. They are all color and are printed on high quality, glossy paper. The first page is a repeat of the cover artwork and rather than the same 'ol boring historical rehash, we get a crisp rendering of all the sprues. The different steps in the instructions

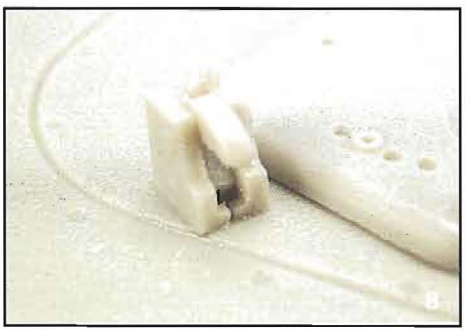
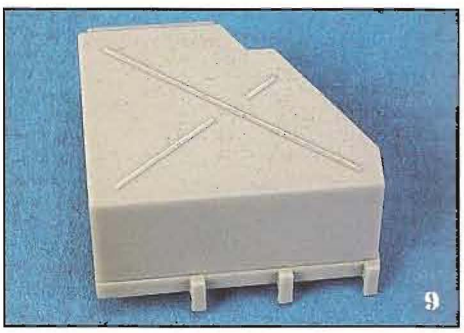
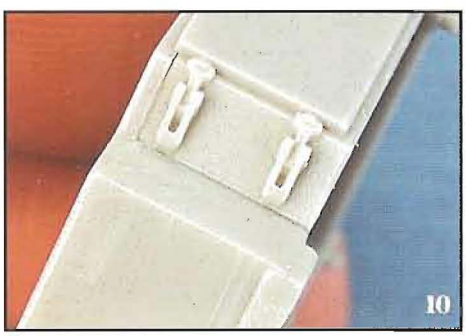
1. The hull bottom is fully detailed. 2. Gussets run the length of the inside. This is a great help in keeping the hull level and square. 3. The final drive housings are separate parts and are chock full of detail. Note the fender bracket, the welds and the axle for the mini-track wheel.

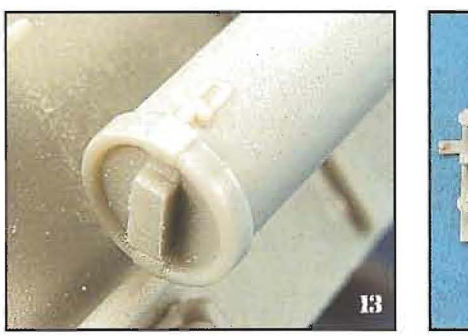
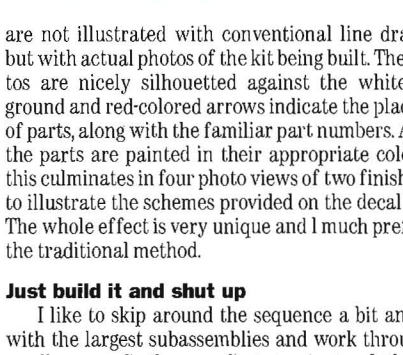
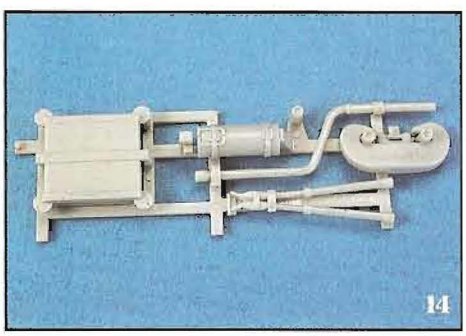
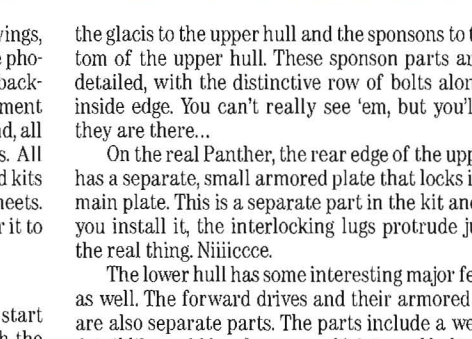
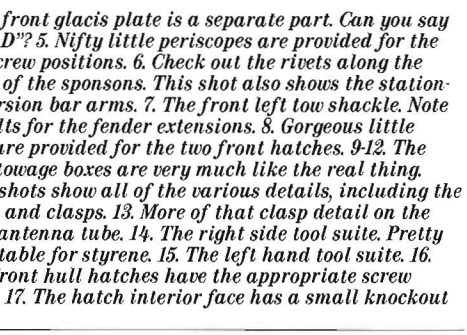






4. The front glacis plate is a separate part. Can you say "ausf. D"? 5. Nifty little periscopes are provided for the front crew positions. 6. Check out the rivets along the inside of the sponsons. This shot also shows the stationary torsion bar arms. 7. The front left tow shackle. Note the bolts for the fender extensions. 8. Gorgeous little locks are provided for the two front hatches. 9-12. The rear stowage boxes are very much like the real thing. These shots show all of the various details, including the straps and clasps. 13. More of that clasp detail on the spare antenna tube. 14. The right side tool suite. Pretty respectable for styrene. 15. The left hand tool suite. 16. Both front hull hatches have the appropriate screw heads. 17. The hatch interior face has a small knockout

are not illustrated with conventional line drawings, but with actual photos of the kit being built. These photos are nicely silhouetted against the white background and red-colored arrows indicate the placement of parts, along with the familiar part numbers. And, all the parts are painted in their appropriate colors. All this culminates in four photo views of two finished kits to illustrate the schemes provided on the decal sheets. The whole effect is very unique and I much prefer it to the traditional method.

Just build it and shut up

I like to skip around the sequence a bit and start with the largest subassemblies and work through the smaller ones. So the very first step is step 8, the front glacis plate. Interestingly, this is a separate part that attaches to a sub frame on the upper hull part. The plate gets five additional parts that include the complete visor mechanism and vision block. I opted to keep my "klappe" open.

I was aiming to get the whole hull together first, so I proceeded to add the rear hull plate to the lower hull, the glacis to the upper hull and the sponsons to the bottom of the upper hull. These sponson parts are fully detailed, with the distinctive row of bolts along their inside edge. You can't really see 'em, but you'll know they are there...

On the real Panther, the rear edge of the upper hull has a separate, small armored plate that locks into the main plate. This is a separate part in the kit and when you install it, the interlocking lugs protrude just like the real thing. Niiiiccce.

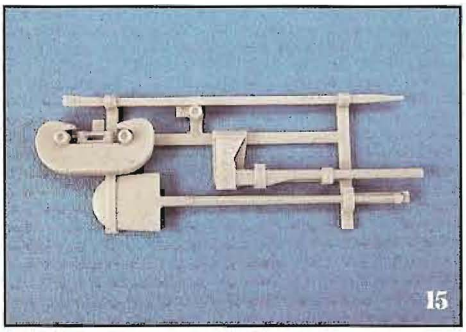
The lower hull has some interesting major features, as well. The forward drives and their armored guards are also separate parts. The parts include a wealth of detail like weld beads, armored joints and bolts.

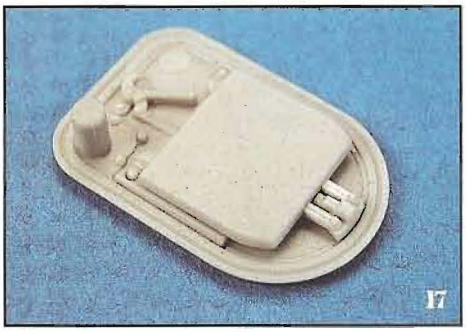
Oddly, the road wheel arms are molded directly on the hull. I didn't like this at first, because it made me think that the lower hull was one of the old Gunze parts (it's not). But after considering it for a while, I started to warm up to the concept. There are no arms to fiddle with or get straight and the solid nature of the hull dictates that the model will sit absolutely flat when compete. If you're worried that this will show, I can assure you that these parts are all but invisible once the road wheels are installed.

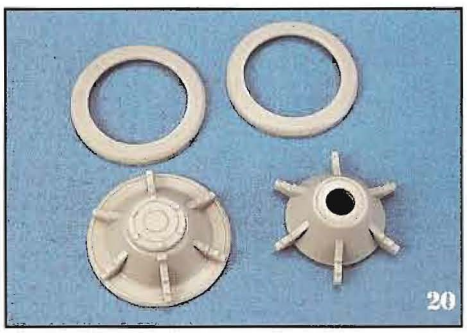
Everything got sealed up with relative ease. There was a small amount of filling on the drive plates and on the back edge of the sponsons. If you skip around like I did, don't forget to add the handy little periscopes to the forward hull positions before sealing it all up.

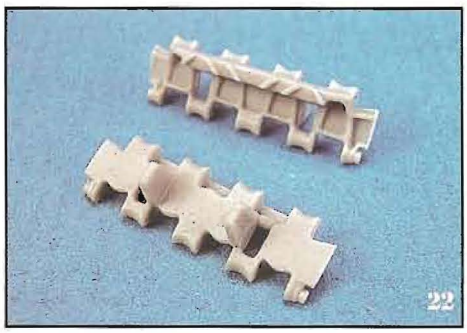
The reason I like to get all this hull wrangling out of the way is that many of the smaller parts that get added to the outer hull can be busted off during this process. No matter how good the kit, there is always some pushing and pressing to get the hull together.

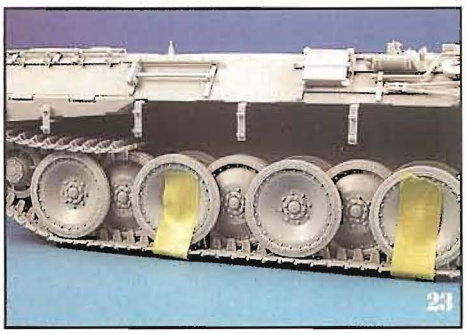
I took some time to lovingly admire the hull at this point. It contains finely tooled detail everywhere. All of the weld beads are accurately rendered, as well as all the flame cut plate details. The top hull plate is actually composed of three smaller plates and all those teeny raised weld beads are spot-on. There's screw head detail everywhere, too. All around the two front hatches and the hatches themselves.

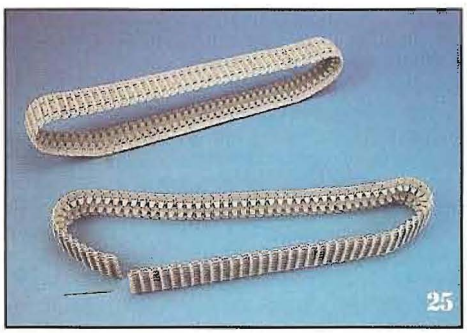












mark, but these detail parts cleverly cover it up. 18. Here are all the various roadwheels, all of them the 24-bolt type. 19, 20. The idler is the early type with three rings. 21. The drive sprockets both have separate hubs. More preparation for that D! 22. The link-to-link are some of the best I've seen from Dragon. They represent the second production type with the face cleats. 23. Here, I'm beginning to add the tracks. Tape was used on the bottom to keep them from shifting. 24. This is how the runs looked when they were dry. I would tack the track down to the wheels later. 25. The tracks were lifted off the model when they were dry. Note the pins.

This gets even better when the details start getting added to the hull. The gun travel lock is a marvel and it contains the option of showing the retaining chain around the barrel. The retaining mechanisms for the hull hatches are only three parts each, but they also amaze.

The three tool racks are another area to geek over. They each contain newly rendered tools. There's nothing here from a previous kit. The spare track racks on the rear of the hull are executed well, although they are a bit on the thick side. This brings up an interesting point about this model. It seems that no matter what, the designers executed every part—even if the part was slightly too thick. I guess they wanted us to know that they knew it was there! I don't consider this a problem at all. The thickest parts (and this is an exaggeration) are the tops of the track racks and the straps that attach the rear stowage boxes. However, even the novice modeler could thin these down in two seconds for a very realistic effect.

And speaking of straps, on early Panthers those rear boxes were attached with two sets, one on the top and one on the bottom. Both are rendered correctly in length and shape. This is also the place to mention the delicate clasp detail that is molded on each of the bins. Normally these would be way too large, or missing altogether. These are as finely rendered as anything I've seen in plastic. With this kind of fidelity, who needs brass? These little buggers are also found on the gun cleaning rod tube mounted on the left side of the hull.

Things really start to pick up at this point. It's just a matter of placing all the remaining hull details. Allow me to gush just one more time about the jack and the towing shackles. The jack has the first multi-part base that I have seen. This means the little "pod" on one side is separate. You'd be surprised what a difference this makes. Oh, and the tow shackles have the distinctive inside loop.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture.

Turret's syndrome

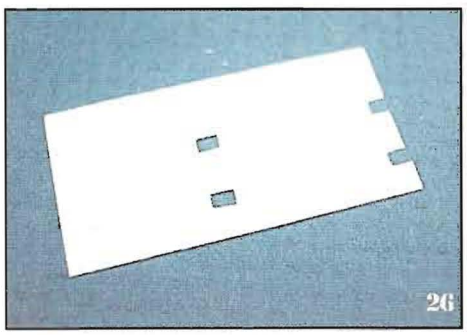
The turret carries right on with the detail fest seen on the rest of the model. More neato weld marks and inter-locking plate detail. The rear hatch has a detailed hinge arm that can be shown open, if you wish.

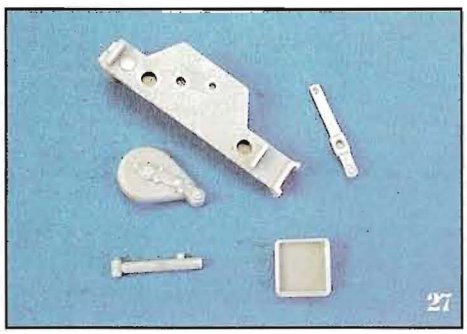
The cupola is a very interesting design. Rather than just being plopped onto the top of the turret, it fits into a ring and then this subassembly gets installed on the turret. This method helps to emphasize the distinctive undercut of the cupola. The cupola part contains the machined grooves used to drain water from the hatch area.

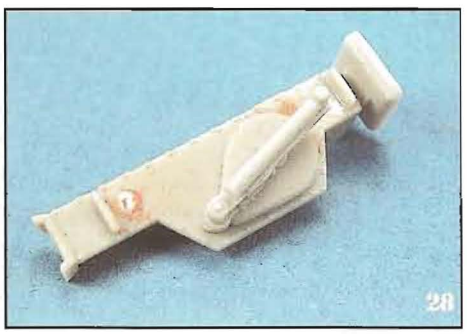
The mantlet is a multi-piece affair that is constructed around the front turret panel. The actual mantlet gets added to this part. Another favorite part alert! Most companies just render the mantlet MG as a tube. DML provides the tip of an MG 34 mounted on a small base to attach to the inside of the mantlet. Yeah, I was excited, too.

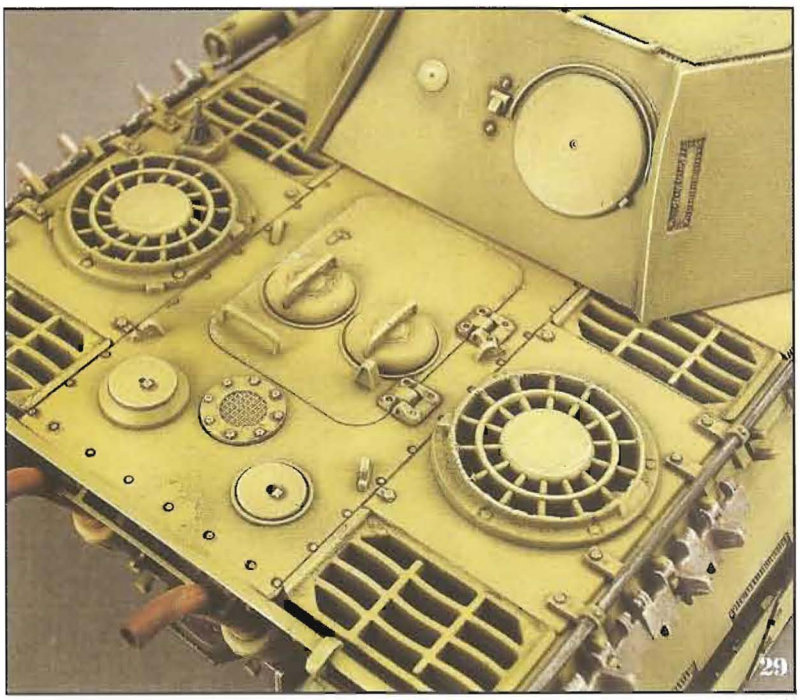
Both an MG ring and a mounting frame are supplied for the cupola. Since the tank I was depicting did not have the frame, I left it off.

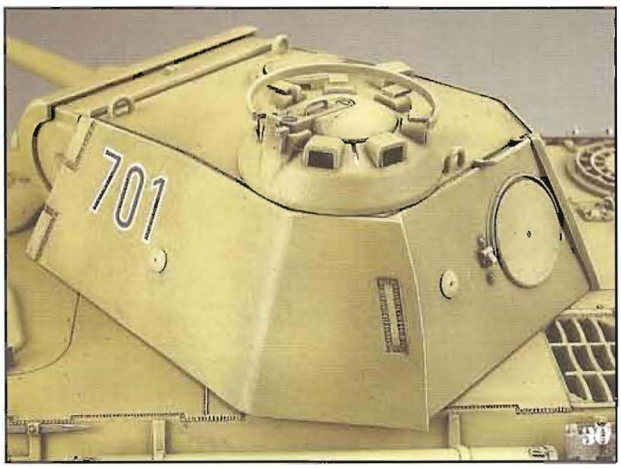
For some reason, there are no periscopes provided for the interior of the cupola. This is a rather significant omission because you can see right into their housings. Fortunately, there are inexpensive alternates, such as the FineMolds set. That is about the most











26. One of the pre-stamped side skirt panels. 27, 28. Steal this! One of the nicest parts of the kit is the jack. 29. Back deck action. Don't try any of the available photo-etch, it won't fit. 30. DML has captured the shape of the turret well. 31. The front glacis with its armored visor and slotted MG port. 32. The rear hull. Everything's

negative thing I can say about this model.

Wheels, tracks, suspension and the meaning of life

All of the wheels have been correctly rendered on DML's kit. They represent the 24-bolt pattern first seen on the ausf. A. This wasn't always the case and I've seen photos with the 24-bolt wheels used only on the second torsion arms, with the rest being the 12-bolt type. This could be a cool detail to integrate into your model. DML is doing a D and you could play the whole mix 'n match game.

As mentioned, the torsion arms are molded as part of the lower hull. Test fitting the wheels will make you love this. Everything was level, the first time around.

The drive sprocket is fully detailed within its interior and it has a separate outside hub. This is, no doubt, a nod towards the D model, which uses a rounded and dished type hub.

The idler wheels are both made up of four parts, which help duplicate the center ridge of the early style wheel.

The tracks are link-to-link, as we've come to expect from DML. The pattern is the six-chevron cleat style introduced with the A in September of 1943. The execution is good, with only very shallow knockout marks on the inside face. It was so minor that I was going to leave it. However, it only took about 20 minutes to clean up every one. The links fit together perfectly.

I have found that the best method for constructing tracks like this is right on the tank. I do try to leave at least one link unglued, so I can lift off the tracks for painting. I made two long runs for the bottoms of the road wheels, using the "Panzermeister" jig shown in issue 28 and I let them dry completely (I used Tamiya Extra Thin cement throughout). I then made shorter runs and installed them around the idler and drive sprocket as soon as the cement started to cure. The Panther has a nice, smooth sag on the top run and the track was only supposed to begin making contact with the third wheel station. One way to duplicate this is to make the run straight from the sprocket to the last roadwheel and then tack it down when the glue is cured. This was the method I adopted because I found it difficult to create that smooth run while the tracks were wet.

I drilled and pinned a single link on the bottom so that the entire run could be lifted off for painting. My method forced me to make the run somewhat tight, which is slightly risky. I wasn't fully satisfied with this method as it was difficult to get the tracks tacked to the tops of the road wheels. I would suggest using a combination of cured and "wet" lengths for the top run. They can be gently bent when dry and this would be a much safer method.

DML provides a full set of side skirts and their hangers. In order to replicate the thickness (or is it thinness?) of these light panels, they have been die-cut from styrene stock. This is quite clever and the panels are simply popped out from the waste material. A small amount of clean up is necessary, but no more than an ordinary part.

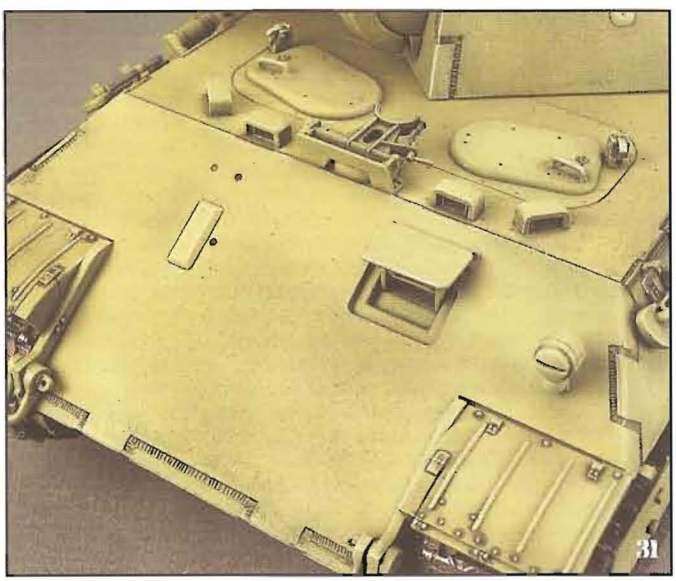
The hangers are, again, on the thick side, but remember, once the skirts are installed you see very little of them. The hangers install in pre-marked spots on the underside of the sponsons.

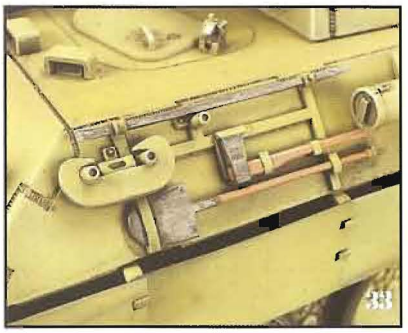
I paint and discover love

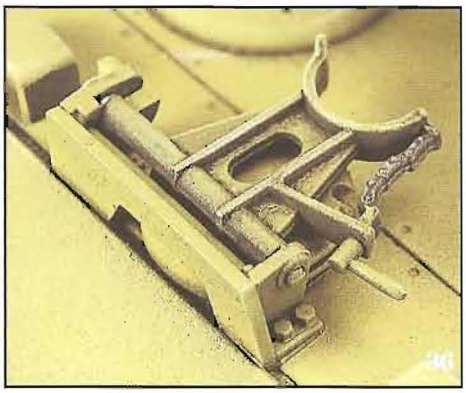
All of the wheels were left off the hull for painting, along with the tracks, skirts and turret.

I deviated from my normal painting procedure this time around. I used a German Dark Yellow from the Vallejo "Air" line. This paint is pre-thinned and can be used right from the bottle. The color is a little more yellow than, say, the equivalent Tamiya color. I thin mine a little more with water, because my Iwata Micron SB doesn't seem to like this paint very much. However, the paint goes on so well that I don't mind struggling with the brush a bit. The paint goes on very "tight" and dries quickly. It is also very tolerant to an oil wash.

I sprayed the dark yellow over a black base to cre-







where it's supposed to be. I really liked those tow shackles with the inside loop. 33. The painted left side tool suite. Watch out Aber! 34. The side skirts were all painted a slightly different shade. 35. A close-up of the detailed cupola. 36. That sweet little travel lock. An option is provided to show it wrapped around the gun. 37. This is how the finished tracks look without the side skirts.

ate some shadow effects and I used a template for the road wheels. A small amount of beige was added to the dark yellow to create some highlights.

I randomly painted the side skirts with various shades of the yellow. Photos often show a great deal of variation in the color from panel to panel.

The tools were picked out used Vallejo wood and dark gray for the metal parts. I have taken to a new method for metalizing my tools. I used to use a Berol colored pencil to add metallic highlights and I still do. However, I noticed that if you smudge the pencil with your finger, it takes on a dull and much more realistic sheen. My grotesquely over sized fingers can't really get to things like axe heads and crowbars. So I have duplicated the same effect with a small amount of synthetic oil (found wherever model trains are sold) using a tool called a "clay shaper." These look just like paintbrushes, but the tips are made from soft rubber. These can be found at most good art stores and when used with a very small amount of the oil, they duplicate the same effect as your finger (if it was a centimeter long).

Decals are provided for two schemes. Interestingly, both schemes are seen on vehicles without zimmerit. Most of my experiences with DML decals have been good and the Panther set is up to standard. To speed things along, I duplicated the scheme of the 23rd Panzer Regiment using black and white tactical numbers from Archer.

The standard wash of burnt sienna and black was applied and I emphasized the weld beads and bolt details heavily. Drybrushing followed using various shades of Vallejo beige and tan.

The tracks were painted and weathered prior to installing them on the tank. They were sprayed with Vallejo gunmetal and then weathered with a wash of Hudson & Allen mud dissolved in Tamiya thinner. When this was dry, they were drybrushed with Vallejo silver plate. I installed the sprocket and idler into the tracks and then to the model with only the first layer of wheels in place. Subsequent layers were then added and the track runs were closed with the aforementioned pins.

The side skirts were mounted directly to their hangers without glue and that was that.

What just happened?

If you couldn't tell already, I was really charged up by this model. I've been a Panther freak for years (almost as long as I've been a regular freak) and I am very happy to finally get a good quality A model.

I felt the model weighed in pretty well in the accuracy department. It has a very authentic look and feel to it. But... I know that there are those of you out there who will want to run the numbers. So here goes.

Using needle-tipped calipers, I checked various dimensions and angles throughout the model, totaling 14 key measurements and all of the relevant angles (turret, hull armor, etc.). I compared them with two sources. The first was scale drawings found in the Japanese publication *Achtung Panzer number 4* on the Panther. The plans here are very specifically stated as 1/35th scale and are reputed to be very accurate. All the dimensions were within .5 to 1 millimeters to these plans, with many being dead on. The only exception was the turret height, which was about 2.5 millimeters higher on the kit. Critical angles on the hull and turret were an exact match.

I did the same thing using the Hilary Doyle drawings in the Jentz Panther book with much the same results. Although they do not have a stated scale, they match the model well. The Doyle plans did show a slightly shallower angle for the front glacis plate, about a .75 to 1-millimeter difference. The gun cleaning rod tube is also 2 millimeters shorter on the Doyle plans, but the turret height was within 1 millimeter.

All of the various details are where they are supposed to be and match both plans within the same tolerances as mentioned above. In other words, I'm calling this operation a success from an accuracy point of view!

The only significant omissions in the kit were the cupola periscopes and any kind of photo-etch for the engine deck screens. The absence of the etched parts is made more acute due to the fact that none of the current crop of aftermarket products fit this model (I know, I checked). It's been a good long while since etched parts were included in a DML kit and this is most likely the reason the price is under $32.00.

I highly recommend this model. Go out and get one right now and get ready for that D!

—Pat Stansell

MMiR RECCE

Dragon Sd.Kfz.171 Panther A Early Type (Italy 1943/44). Kit number 6160. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price $31.98.

References

Germany's Panther Tank The Quest for Combat Supremacy, by Thomas L. Jentz, Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1995. ISBN 0887408125. This is certainly the "bible" for all Panther lovers. An excruciatingly detailed look at the development and design of all the variants.

Sturm & Drang No. 5 Panther Tank Magazine Special, Delta Publishing Co. Ltd. Japan, 1992. Tough to find, it's been out of print for a while. A good selection of combat photos. Some of the same material can now be found in the Ground Power series.

Panther & Its Variants by Walter Spielberger, Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1993. ISBN 0887403972. This is the English version and can in some ways be considered part one to Jentz's book.

Achtung Panzer No.4 Panther, Jagdpanther & Brummbär, Koji Ogawa/Dai Nippon Kaiga, Japan. 1994. ISBN 4499226430.

AIRBORNE SHOTGUN

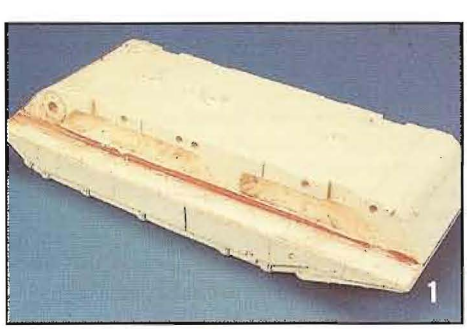
Jaguar tops a big heap of resin with a dash of plastic

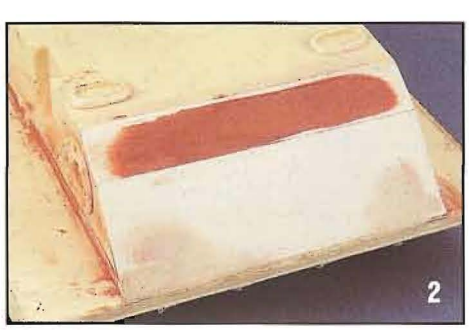
The Sheridan is one of those "good news, bad news" tanks. The good news is that the tank is air transportable and its main gun packs a big wallop. "One armored vehicle to go, please." The bad news is that the tank is light because it has skimpy armor protection. This means even more bad news when it comes to crew survivability against just about anything.

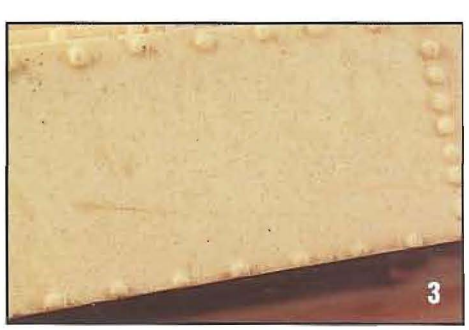
The Sheridan was developed just for the air transportable role and was designed to be dropped either by multi parachute(s) or pushed out of the back of a fast moving C130. Sort of an undignified way for a tank to go into battle, don't you think? One of the very strict criteria for the tank's design was that it would mount the Shillelagh missile system. This rather novel gun system could fire conventional rounds, as well as a finned projectile. This was a cool idea that didn't always work great. It seems that the basic design for the round was case-less, which essentially meant a crappy cardboard tube, instead of a metal one. When the gun fired, the tube was supposed to be vaporized. This didn't always happen due to the crappy tube absorbing moisture.

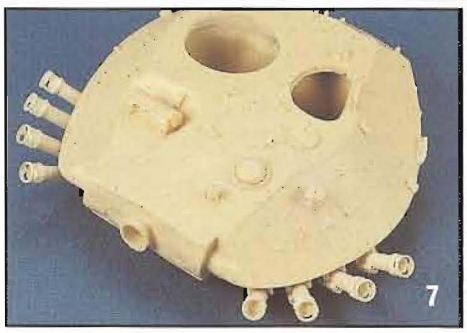
The Sheridan's first deployment was also a "good news, bad news" situation. In the good news department, the 1st Squadron of the 11th ACR swapped their M113s for the Sheridan and got a heavier vehicle with a 152mm main gun plus the .50 cal. With the recent introduction of the M6252 Beehive round for the main gun, this news got even better for the Blackhorse Regiment. In the bad news department, the 3rd Squadron of the Fourth Cav had to turn in their hale, hearty and thick-skinned M48A3s for the Sheridan. This, no doubt, was the ultimate head-scratching bummer for the guys of the Three-Quarter Cav.

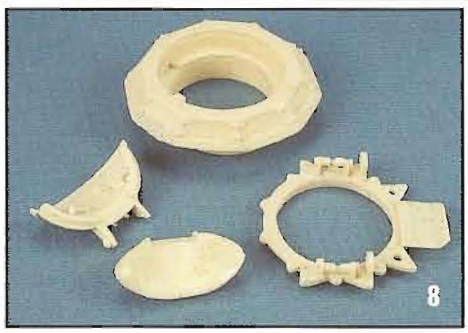
Many of the vehicle's shortcomings were later eliminated and it continued to serve right through the early nineties in Operation Desert Storm. To its credit, the Sheridan did have some very clever features. For example, the infantry telephone was located inside the left rear taillight, which lifted up out of the hull to reveal the phone.

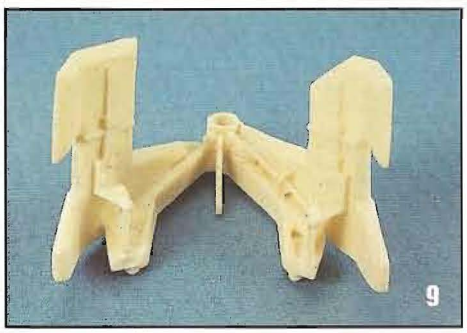


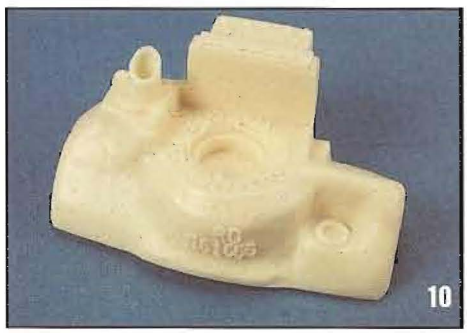


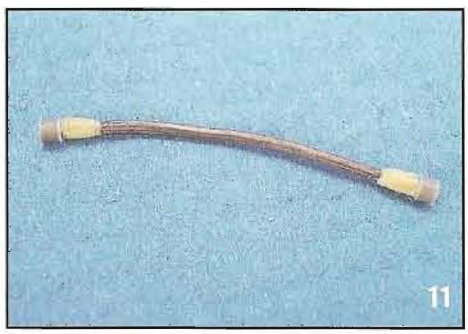


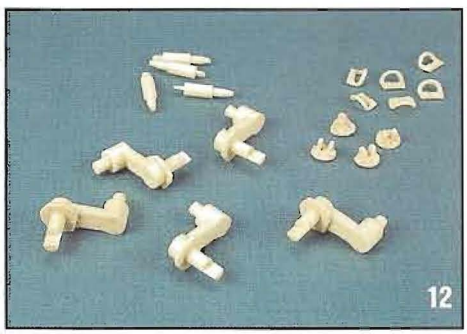












1. The hull under construction, red putty in evidence. 2. The rear required a bit more surgery. 3. All the sanding wiped out the lower row of rivets on the upper hull. 4. This was the solution, some quality time with the punch and die set. 5. Don't forget to install the driver's hatch before closing up the hull. 6. This is the very delicately molded headlight guard. 7. The turret coming into shape. The smoke launchers have been installed. 8. Here are the basic components of the commander's cupola. 9. This is the factory front shield for the cupola. 10. The gun mantlet is complete with casting numbers. 11. A wire lead was fashioned from solder and scrap plastic for the searchlight. 12. The major suspension components, along with the lifting hooks for the lower hull. 13. The front idlers and the drive shaft hubs. 14. The main styrene components for a single road wheel.

Hey look, it's a model

When Jaguar first announced the release of a Sheridan, I was fairly thrilled. The old Tamiya kit was a bear and the subsequent Academy version was basically the same thing. I didn't quite have the modeling courage for a rebuild—a major undertaking. Jaguar has a well-earned reputation for fantastic casting and the kit is great looking in the box. The whole thing is resin, except the tracks and roadwheels, which are molded in black styrene. Setting these small sprues aside, I got busy with the resin.

Jaguar provides pretty comprehensive instructions for the kit and, although photocopied, they are very clear. The instructions indicate a sequence of construction, but I felt more confident just working from the ground up.

There is nothing much to speak of in the way of overpours. The upper and lower hulls are two large pieces of resin. The biggest problem with large thick pieces of resin is that they generate quite a bit of heat while they cure. This can cause them to shrink or change shape. This is the case with these parts. The bottom of the hull is somewhat shorter than the top, in addition to being warped. To avoid drastically reducing the depth of both parts, I sanded each bit by bit. The bottom hull flattened out quickly at either end, so I opted for putty in the middle. The top went completely flat, but in the process I wiped out a good portion of the small rivets along the bottom edge.

I was anxious to close this deal, so I hastily glued together the hull parts. Remind me to tell you later that the driver's hatch needs to be installed before this. Anyway, the gap in the center of the parts was liberally lathered with red putty. The rear of the lower hull was a total loss, so I installed two styrene panels that matched the proper angles. The open areas beneath were filled with super glue. The area was still a bit off, but it was filled with putty and sanded square. Once the various small parts were added to this area the repairs were all but invisble.

Next, I turned my attention to the suspension. There are two basic torsion arms, but they are installed in opposite directions. Four of these get shock absorbers with the associated brackets and the same holds true for the front idlers. I had my doubts that these resin parts would properly support the hefty resin hull, but they did just fine. Some very nifty lifting handles also get stuck on in among the suspension. The last things added were the bases for the drive sprockets.

Spastic plastic

I eyed the black plastic sprues that contained the roadwheels and tracks, pacing around my workbench and occasionally shouting at them as I passed by. Each of the road wheel sprues contains two wheel halves and two outer tires, along with two idler wheel/drive sprocket halves and a center sprocket. You'll have a crap load of stuff left over for your parts box! The tracks are sixteen to a sprue.

I was impressed with the execution of all these parts. They were very crisp and for some reason I

15. The three parts on the left create the sprocket at the upper right. 16. Two of the same parts make up the idler, along with a resin spacer. 17. The ends of the bottom track runs were curved to match the road wheels. 18-20. This sequence illustrates the track installation. The final shot shows the tracks prior to tacking them to the road wheels. 21. The completed front end. Several areas were painted to represent glass. 22. Lots of detail on that back end. Note the strap for the shovel.

really dug the separate tires. The drive sprockets are simple enough, with just three parts each. They fit perfectly over the resin shafts. The idlers used the same parts, minus the center gear, which is handily replaced with a little resin spacer. I attached the road wheels to the hull, but left the sprockets and idlers for later, when the tracks went on. I'd heard stories about the tracks and they turned out to be true. More on that fun later.

Before I added the many great looking details to the hull, I had to deal with that thorny hull rivet issue. As I stated above, many of the rivets were wiped out in my sanding adventure. Luckily for me, the guy who built the master pattern had the same Waldron punch and die set as I do. I found the matching size die and started punching away. For such a tedious task, it went surprisingly fast. I used my dividers to scribe a vague guide line along the bottom of the hull for the new row of rivets. A ghost of each old rivet remains on the hull and this was my vertical marker. I touched each new rivet to a small puddle of super glue and attached it to the hull. Once they were all on and dry, I lightly sanded them using a fine grit sanding stick until they matched the thickness of the other rivets. The end result was all but indistinguishable from the other areas of the kit. This is not something I would want to do to every kit I build, but it wasn't the worst thing I've ever had to do to fix a model.

Hatch gaff

Oh yeah—the driver's hatch. This is designed to be installed in the top of the hull prior to the two halves being put together. I did not do this, so I had to open a hole in the turret race and snake the part through while doing a mean impression of a contortionist.

There is little else to add to the hull in the way of detail. Most of it is already there. The actual design of the upper hull is fairly intricate and all this is represented perfectly on the model. Lifting hooks get added to all four corners and a single pioneer tool (a shovel) is also provided. This was a little odd. You'd think that they would give you the other stuff, too. In addition to the headlights, resin headlight guards are also provided. A part like this is typically a disaster in resin, but both parts were beautifully cast. Two vertical supports are added from styrene and that's that.

Up on the roof

A good amount of detail action is found on the turret. This version of the Sheridan includes the factory-installed armor around the commander's hatch, as well as the field-installed "cav" shields. This whole assembly is a marvel of casting and detail. The .50 cal provided is quite ambitious with its hollow cooling jacket and other details all provided in resin. Although I was impressed with the part, I visualized myself breaking it many times and saying several bad words in the process. I opted for a plastic replacement from Academy. I did use the supplied ammo box and feed tray. It contains a short length of ammo that snakes into the side of the gun and looks extremely cool.

I constructed the entire cupola as a separate assembly and left it off the turret right through painting and weathering.

The remainder of the turret is just as detailed as the rest of the model. Areas especially worthy of mention are the gun mantlet (cast numbers), searchlight and smoke launchers (depicted empty). By the way, the launcher tubes don't clear the hull, so if you were planning on playing with your Sheridan on the carpet while going "dweeu, dweeu, dweeu," just forget it. This is completely invisible when the kit is finished.

Perhaps the most amazing details on the turret are the many tie-downs found all over the sides. Each was cast perfectly but that's not the most amazing part. The ammo containers provided include the straps and buckles. and just enough of the strap protrudes from the edge of each ammo box casting to mate it perfectly with the tie-down. The result is that the part appears to have been actually looped through the tie-down. I still get a little choked up just thinking about it.

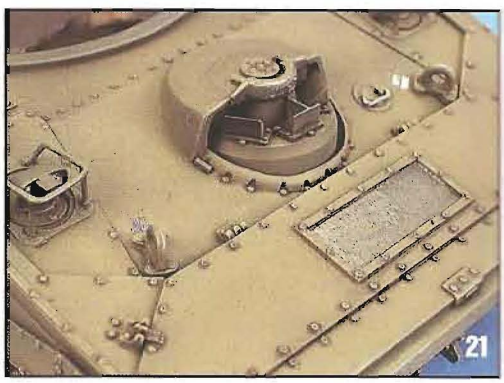
The turret-mounted searchlight contains its interior igniter, but no lens is provided. I am lucky enough to possess (on extended loan) one of the old VLS large size punch and die sets. Using the two largest sizes, I was able to punch out a clear lens and a styrene ring to go around it. I painted the ring before attaching it to the lens and left the entire assembly off the front of the light until after painting.

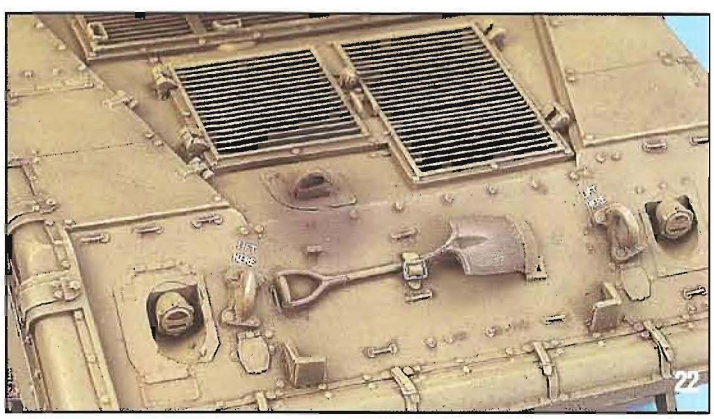
I fashioned a lead for the searchlight using solder and the ends of a Tamiya Tiger track cable.

Most photos of 'Nam Sheridans that I've seen show the vehicle with two antennae. Both mounts are provided in the kit, but only one has a base. I used brass rod for the one with the base and a Mini-Mecca steel antenna for the other. This part already has a spring base on it.

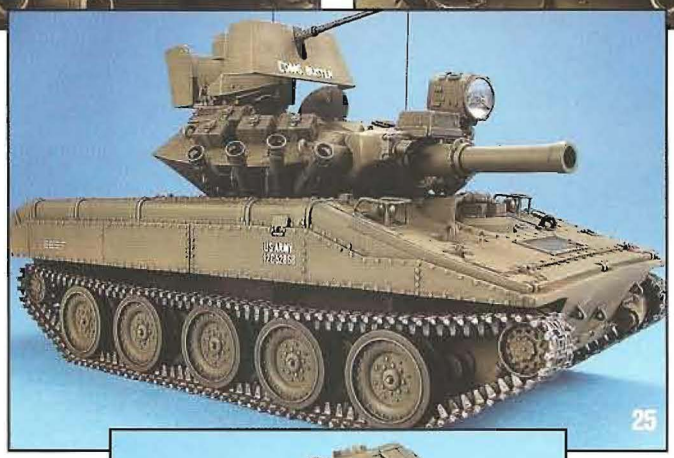
Let's bring the room down a little

Some fairly competent modelers had warned me





23, 24. Overall views of the completed turret. A real feast of detail. 25. I'll add a rack and some gear on the model later. This kit will later be used in a diorama with the M123 tractor and will appear in the Modeler's Guide to Engineering and Recovery Vehicles, part two. 26. The painted search light and its lead.



that the tracks on this kit were a real bear. I was determined to conquer them regardless of how hard I had to cry to do it. Sheridan tracks are similar to the T72 in that the connecting pins run through a shielded shaft. The shaft shields the hex nut that secures the track pin. The kit's tracks are attached to their sprue right at this point, so forget about the nut detail. This did not bother me, because we are talking about a very small area. However, the thickness of this part of the track and the sprue itself are about the same. This meant that no matter how hard I tried, all the links were a slightly different width.

Sheridan tracks also do not really sag, they just droop in one place. They have a very smooth and even run from the idler wheel to the drive sprocket, only making complete contact with the center three roadwheels. I think I may I have solved both problems.and here's how I did it.

To install the links, I first glued about five or six around each idler and drive sprocket. This would allow me to adjust each to allow the links to properly meet the ones coming up from the bottom. I then made two long lengths of tracks for the runs underneath the roadwheels. These did not extend beyond the roadwheels, but had one link on each end lifted to curve around them. Shorter lengths were added and the idler and drive sprockets were turned to meet them. I constructed one long run (and let it dry) for the top that ran straight across from the idler to the sprocket. The idea was to be able to press this down and glue it when the links were dry to create that nice, smooth run. In the end, the result was far better than that depicted on the box top! A word of warning. This took nearly every single link provided in the kit. Don't loose any.

When all the links were dry, I took a large, coarse emery board (the kind you steal from your wife) and sanded the ends of the links all at once. You could also tape a piece of sandpaper to a board and obtain the same effect, but you wouldn't get to yell at your wife. I used successively finer grades of emery board until the finish was smooth. This evened up the links nicely. I did not do the inside runs, only a bit at the front. Once this was complete, I was ready to paint. Wahoo!

Sheridan schemes

For my 'Nam Sheridan, I went with a nice, dark OD mixed with Tamiya Panzer Gray and OD. This went over a coat of black primer, which further darkened the finish. I didn't realize just how much detail was on this model until it had a coat of paint. Once it was colored, that resin really started to sing. Some shading was also done with straight OD.

I was careful while applying color around the tracks and wheels. I used a template to paint the wheels with care; the tracks stayed mostly black during finishing.

The ammo cans were painted in a slightly darker shade and all the straps were picked out with a lighter shade of OD.

No decals are provided in the kit, so I turned to the old VP sheet of Vietnam markings. This sheet contains several registration numbers and bumper codes that are appropriate for a Sheridan of this time period. These were added, along with a few placards for the searchlight (Fingerprint Designs), a stencil for the rear hull (it's there on the real vehicle, but I don't know what it says) and a few "lift here" markings from Archer. I also opted for a yellow "Cong Buster" slogan for the commander's MG shield, just to be silly. The box top artwork shows several stars, but my references rarely, if ever, showed them.

The whole vehicle got a light over spray of Tamiya dark earth followed by Tamiya buff. The use of the dark earth color was confined to the undercarriage, but the buff was lightly applied over the entire model to represent dust and dull down the markings.

The tracks were very carefully painted with Vallejo gunmetal and then drybrushed with Vallejo silver plate.

The model was given your basic oil wash, with special attention being paid to all those rivets and little details on the hull.

Drybrushing was done using lighter shades of Vallejo khaki. I did quite a bit of "chipping" on the turret with silver Berol pencil. The crew (and friends) spent a lot of time outside the vehicle due to the danger of mines, so I theorized that the paint would have taken a major beating in these areas.

The commander's armored glass was given several thin black washes and was then glossed with Tamiya clear. This same method was used on the driver's periscope glass and the folded splash shield window.

The interior of the searchlight was sprayed with Vallejo silver plate using a template and then the igniter (painted OD) was added, followed by the lens and the ring.

And that, as they say...

That about wrapped up it for this session. I will eventually go back and add one of the racks so commonly seen on these vehicles, plus a bunch of gear.

The biggest drawbacks of the kit were, obviously, the tracks and the hull warp. Clearly, the warping issue would not apply to every kit out there. However, I was so pleased with the end result that I am hesitant to criticize the kit. It's got first rate detail throughout and it is simply world's away from the old Tamiya kit. If you've got the dough, like resin and can stomach a few hiccups, snag this guy.

—Pat Stansell

MMiR RECCE

Jaguar US M551 Sheridan Vietnam. Kit number 63903. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price $99.98. Also available in Desert Storm flavor.

References

M551 Sheridan in action by Jim Mesko, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1990. ISBN 0-89747-253-5. A great, inexpensive general reference with plenty of Vietnam photos and a couple of color illustrations.

Sheridan, A History of the American Light Tank Part 2 by R.P. Hunnicutt, Presidio Press 1995. ISBN 0-89141. The whole story, right before your very eyes. A fantastic hard cover reference and a must for all modern armor fans.

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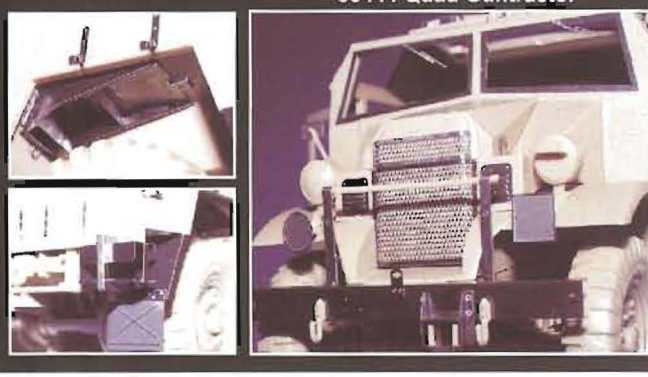

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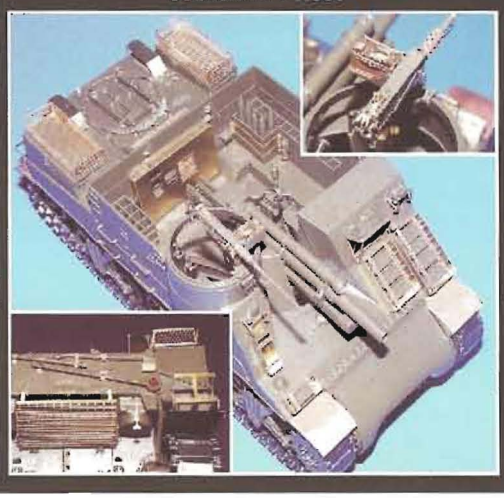

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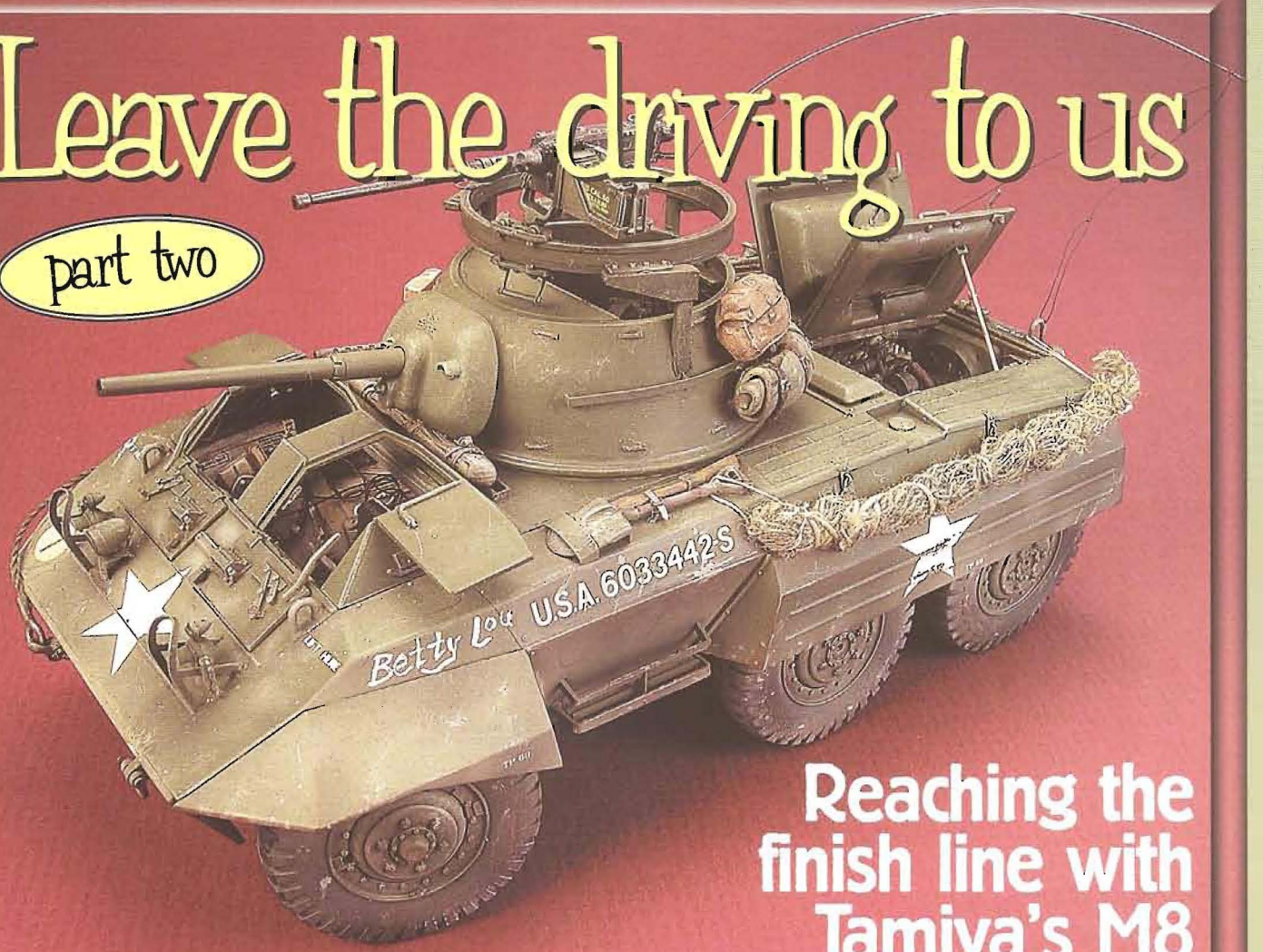
part two



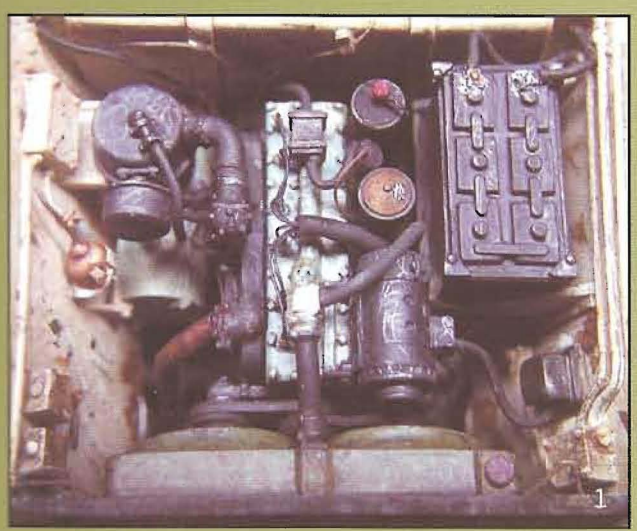
Reaching the finish line with Tamiya's M8

If you're just joining our program—already in progress—you might want to pick up the previous issue (#28) and see how we got to this point. What we have here is a somewhat insane look at Tamiya's M8 Greyhound, a comprehensive bumper-to-bumper detailing job at its most anal. Every available M8 photo was studied in an effort to make the kit as accurate as possible and open 'er up. And on we go.

"The ashtray and the paddle game, that's all I need—and the remote control."

Once again we'll let the photos do the talking, with the captions listing the details added. But here are a few things worth noting. With the front wheels turned, the front hydraulic lines were added using flexible tubing. The front right towing shackle was installed with the tow cable hook already on; it's not an easy fit so be careful. A motor tool was used to create the four notches found in each outside lip of the engine compartment; these correspond to the scratch built bolts and latches added to the two engine hatches. Some M8s featured tie downs on top of these hatches for securing gear to the engine deck; the TMs show vehicles with and without. (I didn't add them, but they're available on the Eduard set.) A grounding strap for the engine was added using lead foil on the right side, running from the top of the manifold to the hinge area. This early '44 vehicle features the later two-speed turret traversing mechanism located at 1000 on the turret ring and was detailed with bolt heads on the mount, plus a wire pin through the turret lock.

Due to space restrictions inside the turret, the M8's .30 cal was separated from its ammo box by the 37mm cannon. Thus an ammo channel ran over the main gun. This channel was made by heating Plastruct C-shaped strip over a candle. A bit of spare etch was used for the travel lock lower bracket.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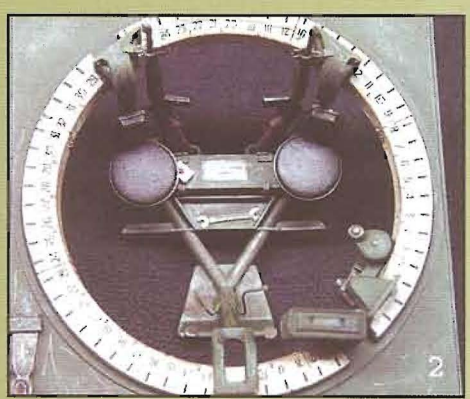
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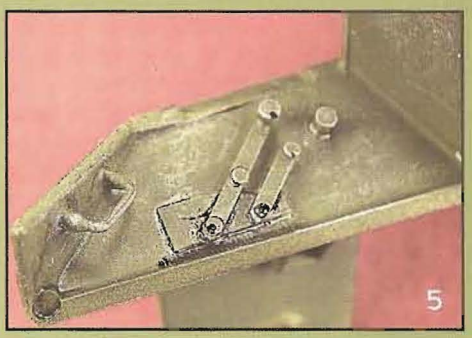
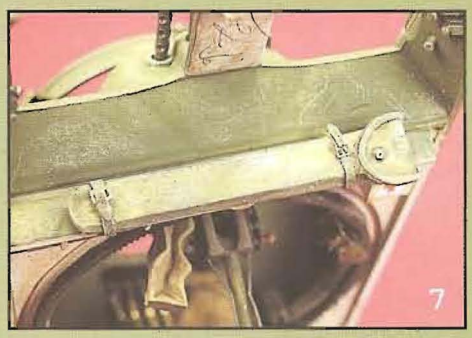
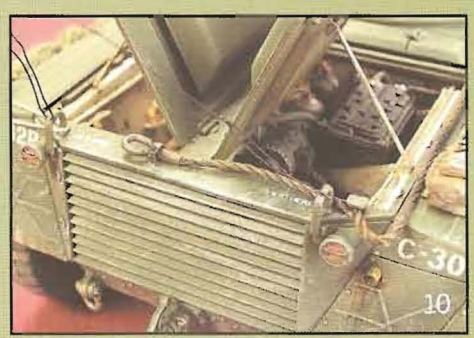
1. Say bye-bye! This is the finished and painted engine prior to sealing up the hull. The front is towards the top. 2. Here is a final view of the entire array of the FD decals for the turret ring. Only portions are visible once the turret top is added.

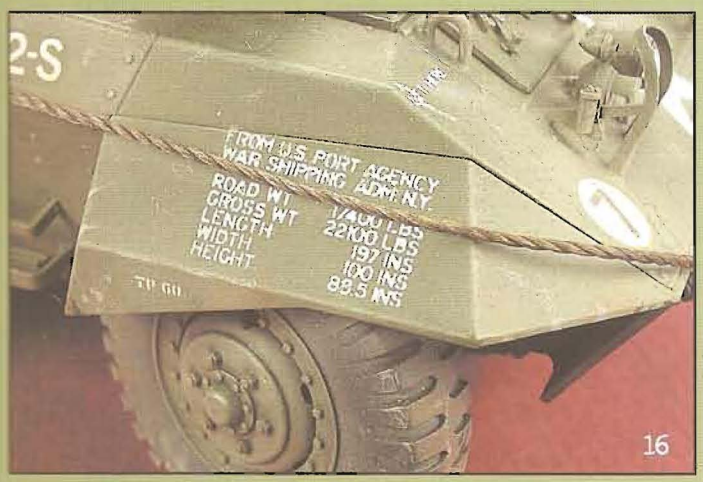


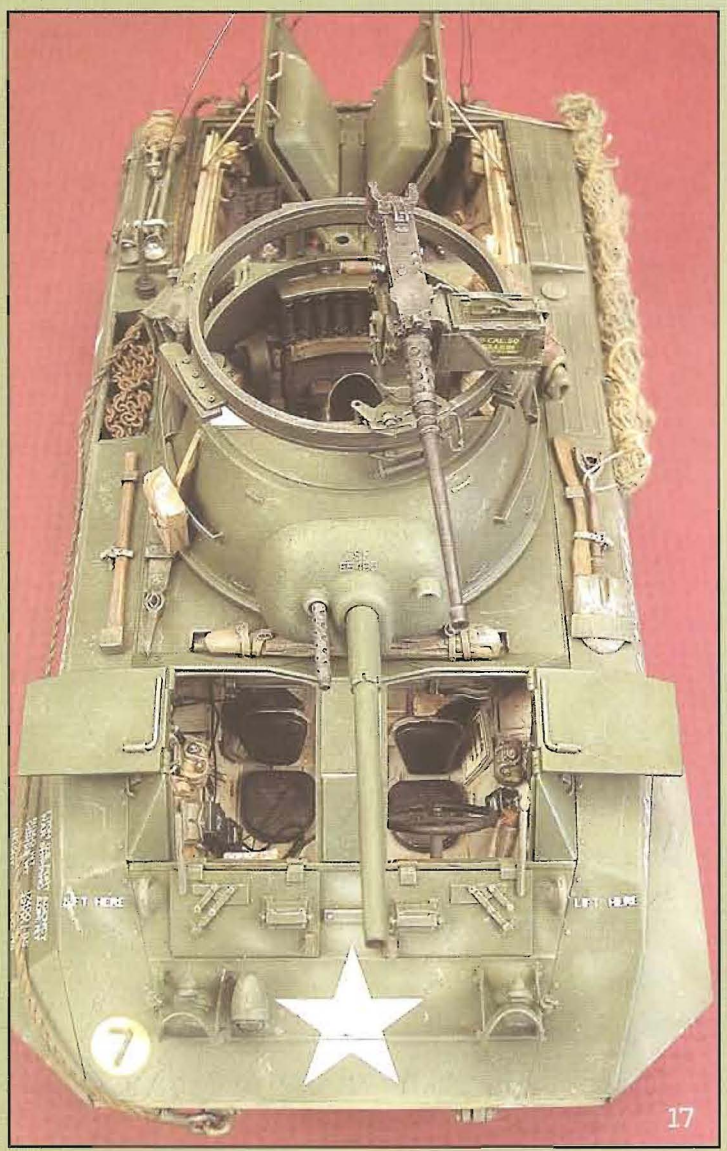


8. The firing pedals were made with punched foil mounted on spare etch arms. Left pedal is for the 37mm, and right is for the .30 cal. 's. This is beneath the center panel, between the forward hatches. The latches were made from lead foil. The grab handles were made from copper wire. The ED decal set includes the two perfect placards for this area. 5. The RTO's interior direct vision slot. VP provides these replacement covers. Note the extra knob, punched from plastic, for releasing the open hatch from the side armature. 6. The MP 65 antenna mount for the SCR 506 radio can be found in several VP armor sets, including the Sherman update. Next to it is a bit of brass strip forming the tow cable guide. 7. The breech cover was stowed in a bag on the front side of the crossbeam, seen here using Aber straps and an extra VP bag. The crossbeam itself is heavy strip plastic. 8, b, c, d. The VP update includes a fine cast resin .50 cal. The etched locking pins and chains were taken from one of their older sets. 9. Thin plastic sheet was added to the engine hatch interiors to cover injection marks. Note the position of the two scratch built locks, here in the open position. The grab handles were bolted on, so Grandt Line bolt heads were used underneath. The prop bar is brass rod, plugged into a bracket fashioned from Plastruct channel. Note the bit of lead foil running up from the manifold to the lip of the hatch opening; this is a grounding strap for the electrical system. 10. The rear lip of the engine deck, showing Royal's tow cable latch and the guide cut from Plastruct. 11. The center side panels above the mine racks are missing these four bolts, which were punched from sheet plastic. The pick handle has a closed bracket on the end, an L-shaped bracket on the side, plus a pair of Aber tie downs, foil strap, and Royal buckle. 12. The .50 cal mount on the rear of the turret was detailed with punched plastic and foil.



13. More goodies from the Royal set are these caps with cotter pins, attached to the inside of each of the four towing shackles. 14. The purpose of these small weld marks isn't clear. Some photos show only one, some two, and some four (two on each side of the rear vent). Two were added on the left side using Apoxie Sculpt. 15. The completed turret assembly includes the turret deck, mantlet, gun mount, and turret basket. Note the three-scratch built turret rollers, made from 1/48-resin wheels and spare parts. 16. In the decal department the SMA shipping stencil on the right front fender is particularly noteworthy. 17. A view from the top. Much of the detail inside is still visible. The forward right stowage box was opened up and VP's detail set installed, along with an Eduard hinge. This compartment was where the tire chains were located—and there they are.





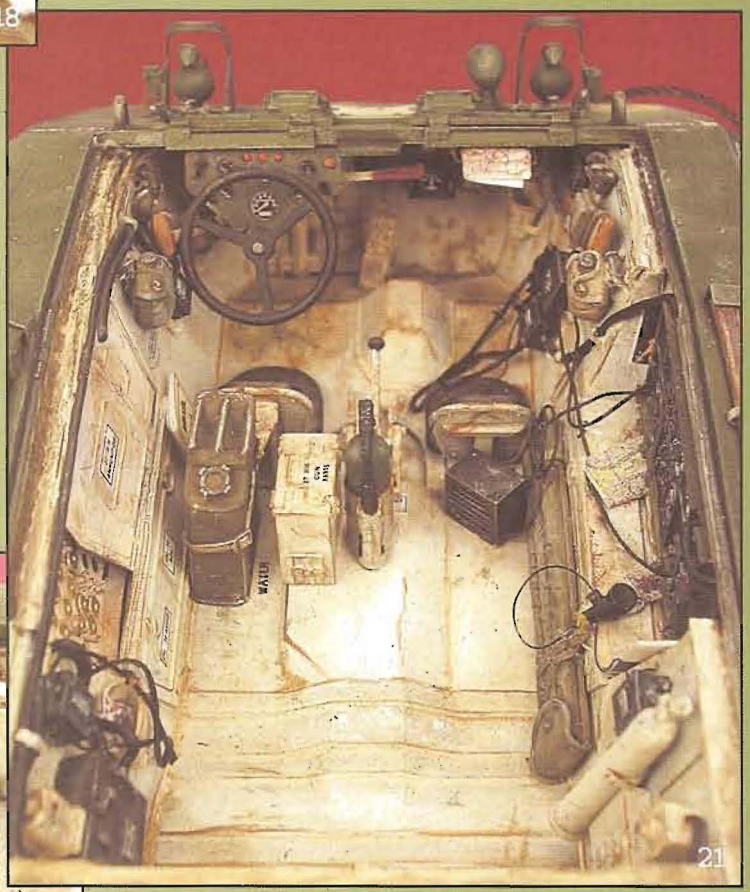
How green was my Greyhound

As the painting phase commenced my M8 was still in numerous subassemblies, the upper and lower hull halves, turret deck, turret, gun assembly, mantlet, .50 cal, engine hatches, main engine assembly, six wheels, and four fenders. Tamiya TS-27 Matt White spray lacquer was sprayed on the engine compartment, upper hull ceiling, and lower hull interior. All other surfaces were then sprayed with Tamiya TS-28 Olive Drab 2. The separate subassemblies and careful angling of each part were a bonus here to avoid overspray. Some M8s may have had OD floors, but most wartime photos depict a white interior. Internal OD surfaces are the forward hatches, engine hatches, turret and turret basket, and upper walls and ceiling around the driver area. (Common sense, really; with all the hatches open, green panels should be visible.) These areas were then airbrushed with Tamiya acrylics and the real fun began.

The engine was painted and weathered before installation, then all those lines and hoses were connected. The white interior was weathered and all details were painted in place before the upper hull was attached. (This followed dozens of test fittings during the construction phase, as each detail item added its own torque to the hull.) The wheels were finished and installed so the four fenders could be attached. I had resolved that the turret and turret deck would be removable so the interior could be fully viewed and repeatedly test fit the deck plate to ensure its fit. The green areas received a thin wash of Winsor & Newton Green Umber/Raw Umber followed by light drybrushing, metal wear, mud, muck, filth, spooge, and post-decaling airbrushed dust. The headlights and tail lights were painted gloss silver, the headlights were coated with Testors Clear Parts Cement, and the tail lights were filled with Tamiya Clear Red and Gunze Sangyo Clear Orange. Tamiya Clear was mixed with Andrea blue to fill in the Protectoscope lenses on the forward hatches. A gold ink marker was bled onto a palette and the output was brush painted on the shells in the turret. Andrea acrylics were mixed to create a green touch-up color around the numerous details.

The lads across the pond

Special mention must be given here to Scale Model Accessories and Fingerprint Designs, whose M8 Greyhound markings sets (see Recce) let you take this kit to new heights. Both are simply fabulous. The M8 interior was festooned with labels and FD provides these in fine fashion, along with placards for the interphone boxes and shifting diagram, plus the fire extinguisher, first aid kit, and more, more, more. Their set also includes the turret index ring markings, and there just aren't enough words to describe 'em. The degree marks are represented in eight separate curved decals that must be trimmed around Tamiya's fixtures. I hand painted the ring with white acrylic, then all decal target areas were coated with Tamiya Clear. The decals were applied then coated with Solvaset followed by Testors Dullcote. (Talk about a quality product—I've been using the same bottle of Solvaset since 1989.) For the exterior I used a combination of kit decals, VP dry transfers, and the SMA ruler-on



18. This is the driver's position with the Eduard gauges in place. Note the operator's manual tucked behind the seat. 19. Here is the completed interphone amplifier and interphone box seen in the left rear corner of the interior. 20. These stowage boxes are located on the rear firewall. 21. This shot gives a bird's eye view of the completed interior. The top hull was left unglued to show it off. 22. The object of my affection: the completed VP SCR-506 radio set with all its various wires. The bag below the radio is for signal flags.

stencils. Particularly noteworthy is the SMA shipping stencil on the right front fender—pure joy. All told, a mind numbing 78 individual markings were applied to the vehicle. (This is why I don't build NASCARs.)

"The ashtray, the remote control, the paddle game, this magazine... and the chair."

The Verlinden update includes two mikes and headphones. If you go whole hog, you'll need four each. This was my original intent, but the extra wiring for all eight items made things a wee bit too cluttered. I settled for a mike stowed in the turret left and next to the radio, the gunner's headphones, and the mike and headphone in the RTO position. (These units comprise Interphone Cordage CO-213, to be specific.) A VP map was inserted in the box above the RTO and another in the turret, to the driver's left is stashed a VP tech manual, a Yanks magazine and pin-up from Harper Castings are seen next to the radio. A VP wrench and handmade pack of Lucky Strikes are found in the turret basket and a carefully preserved pocketknife from Show Modelling (found, I believe, on their SdKfz 222 set) rests atop the right-hand ammo rack. Two VP Mines (Antitank, HE, MI, with fuse) were installed in the right-hand exterior rack. With everything opened, external stowage was limited to a camo net slung on the side, and a savory mix of resin gearage hanging on the turret. Stainless steel wire was used for the antenna. Grand total: one Tamiya kit plus 829 additional parts.

—Joe Porter

Tamiya U.S. M8 Light Armored Car Greyhound. Kit number 35228. Yummy plastic goodness with a spacious interior just right for detailing. Retail price $36.00.

Verlinden M8/M20 Engine & Compartment. Item number 1442. Probably the best 1/35 engine compartment on the market. Retail price $21.95.

Verlinden M8 Interior/Exterior. Item number 1453. Plenty of excellent resin and etch goodies to dress up your Greyhound. You'll need an extra flashlight and carbine plus a pair of interphone boxes, mikes and headphones to make a full load. Retail price $29.65.

Verlinden M8/M20 Stowage Compartments. Item number 1455. All you need in etch to open up the four rear stowage boxes. Retail price $10.95.

Eduard M8 Greyhound Detail Set. Item number 35200. Excellent etch for inside and out, plus acetate dash gauge. Retail price $14.99.

Royal Model U.S. M8 Greyhound Detail Set. Item number 197. Primarily an exterior set in resin and etch, and the gear is superb. Includes postwar wipers for the front hatches. Retail price $25.50.

Fingerprint Designs U.S. Internal Stencilling. Item number FPD 35/010. Quite possibly the coolest decal set ever, with loads of internal markings plus the M8 turret ring index. Retail price about $10.00.

Scale Model Accessories Rub-Down Stencils for M8 Greyhound. Item number SMAP049. A plethora of self-adhesive stencils for the entire vehicle. Retail price $14.95.

References

TM 9-743. Light Armored Car M8 and Armored Utility Car M20. War Department. 21 February 1944. Owner's manual for the M8 and M20.

TM 9-743 C1. Changes to TM 9-743. War Department. 3 June 1944. 68 pages of updates and changes, including the introduction of the .50 cal D70538824 mount and the side stowage bins. Groovy radio photos as well.

TM 11-2702. Installation of Radio and Interphone Equipment in Light Armored Car M8. War Department. 13 April 1944. Complete schematics for wiring up the Greyhound radios. Too cool.

Allied-Axis. Issue 5. Ampersand Publishing, 2002. For pics of the real deal, check out this issue.

U.S. Armored Cars in Action. Squadron/Signal, 1998. Squadron planned this one just right to go along with the Tamiya and Italeri releases.

AFV Interiors Website www.kithobbyist.com/AFVInteriors/m8/m8a.html A valuable online reference which includes great shots and info on the Greyhound.

Military Modelling. Vol. 28. No. 13. Nexus Publishing, 1998. This issue has four pages of color photos featuring a restored M8 Greyhound. Excellent interior photos.

Special thanks to Mike Maggio for his contributions early in this project.

Other stuff

There's plenty more out there for the M8, including the following:

Aber M8 Greyhound Detail Set. Item number 35072. Couldn't get this one in time for this feature, but it's outstanding. Includes turret index decals. Retail price $29.99.

Aber Fenders for M8/M20. Item number 35A72. I almost used these etch pieces, but settled for the kit parts to make the vehicle easier to grasp. Retail price $13.99.

Aber Stowage Bins for M8/M20. Item number 35A83. Complete etch stowage boxes for the upper rear fenders. Retail price $12.49.

Jordi Rubio 37mm Barrel. Item number TG-48. Turned aluminum barrel if you just gotta. Retail price $5.95.

Ordnance Models M8 Deep Wading Kit. Item number A34. White metal exhaust extensions to send your M8 waterborne. Retail price $9.50.

Verlinden M8 Stowage. Item number 1484. A whole load of resin gear to dress up your Greyhound. Retail price $14.25.

Wheels with chains

Plenty of M8s were photographed with their chains on, and four companies stepped up—Verlinden 1411, Jaguar 69893, Tank Workshop 0087, and Yanks 9730.

Other detail sets are available specifically for the Italeri kit.

Collectors interested in purchasing this finished piece can contact jporter@cosmicbovine.com.

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*-new dealer

Non-Habitual

A new tank and a new kit brought to us right around the release of the real thing

Panzerhaubitze

Well, well, well, what do we have here? A new tank and a new kit brought to us right around the release of the real thing? Very interesting. It's Revell's rendition of Germany's mighty Panzerhaubitze (PzH) 2000 self propelled Howitzer, the latest vehicle to enter service with the German Army. We have it right here for you in plastic. Oooo, ahhhh. Big tank with big gun. I'm down for that. Let's go.

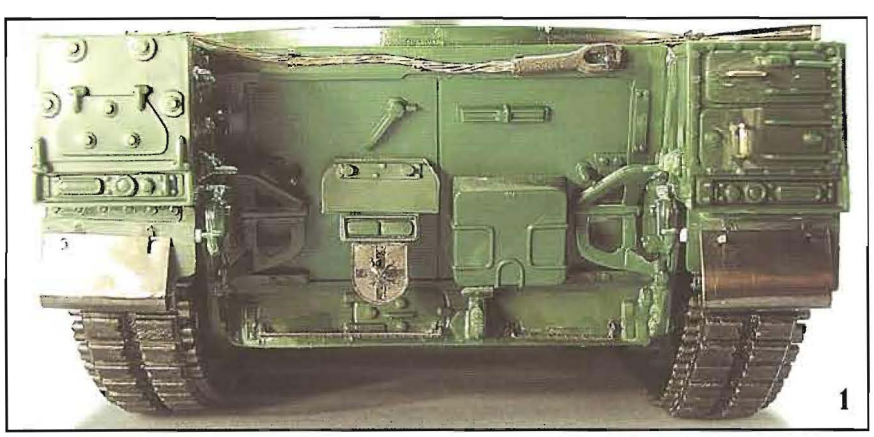
The PzH 2000 includes a dizzying amount of features; so many that we have neither the time nor the space to truly do the subject justice here. Most of the information that I've found has been through military periodicals on line. I'm sure this is due to the fact that the vehicle is so new. Certainly we'll see a book on this beast soon. The bulk of what I discovered has been sales data and propaganda stuff, most likely filtered due to the classified nature of this new weapons system. Good for stats, but lacking the kind of meat we geeks love. So when reading this, know that I, the humble reviewer, am still in search of those ever-important nuts and bolts. So here's what I've found out.

The PzH 2000 started out in the mid 1980's as one of those multi-national efforts to produce a common SPG for NATO. The principals in the project were Germany, Great Britain, Italy and the United States. The fruit of this cooperative venture was the ambiguous SP70. Does this sound like a familiar tune or what? In time, the team fell apart and everyone went their own way and once again no joint venture. You've got to love the global economy. What we ended up with was everyone doing their own thing. The British developed the AS90, the U.S. revamped the M109 "again," becoming the Paladin, and the Italians are still working on it. The Germans, true to fashion, have developed arguably the best of them all, the PzH 2000.

After the demise of the joint venture, the Wegman Co. GmBH, now Krauses-Maffei Wegman (KMW) continued development on their own and entered into a competition for the contract with other firms. Four prototypes were produced and extensively tested in Europe and the United States, from 1991 through 1996. KMW won out and the first batch of 186 vehicles was delivered to the German Army in 1998. The total amount to be produced will be 594, with the balance being completed by 2002. The PzH is intended to replace Germany's fleet of aging M109s, some being over 30 years old!

The PzH 2000 is truly state of the art. The focal point is the new Rheinmetall 155mm L52 Howitzer which can fire standard NATO rounds with a new modular propellant charge system (MTLS), which utilizes standard charge cylinders with up to 6 different amounts of propellant. The system includes an automatic loading system, eliminating the need to lower the gun tube to re-load, thus allowing for a much higher rate of fire. A total of 60 rounds can be carried, along with 288 MTLS modules, which are stored in a special magazine in the rear of the turret. The magazine features blowout panels similar to the Abrams. Crew safety was one of the top design priorities.

The performance of the L52 is remarkable, with normal shells being fired at a range of 30 km and assisted shells up to 40 km. The AS90 has a range of 24 to 30 km and the M109 18 to 24km. A big advantage when compared. The PzH requires a crew 5 as



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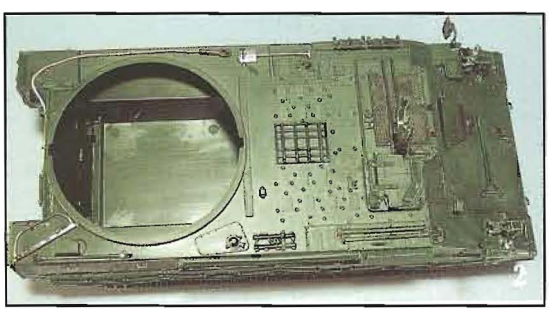
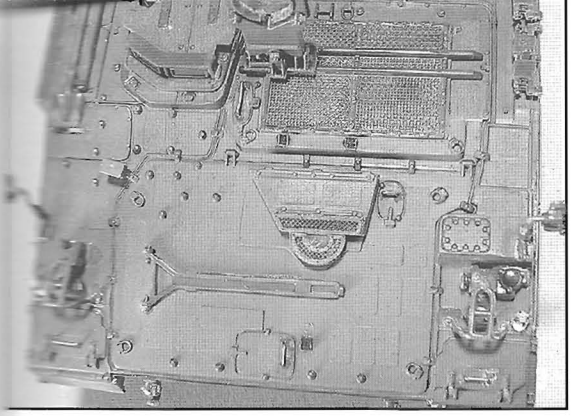
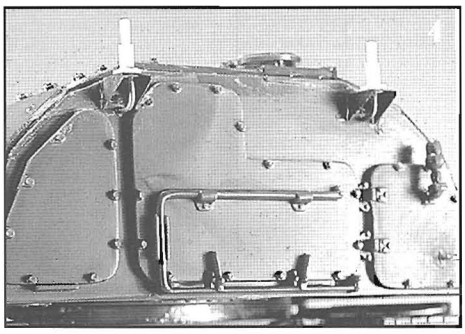
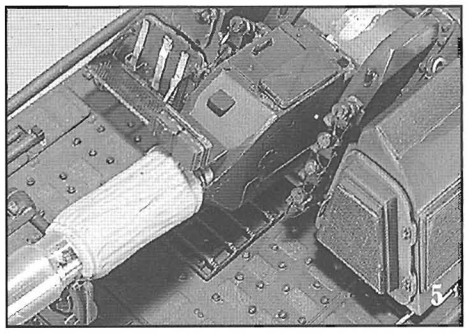
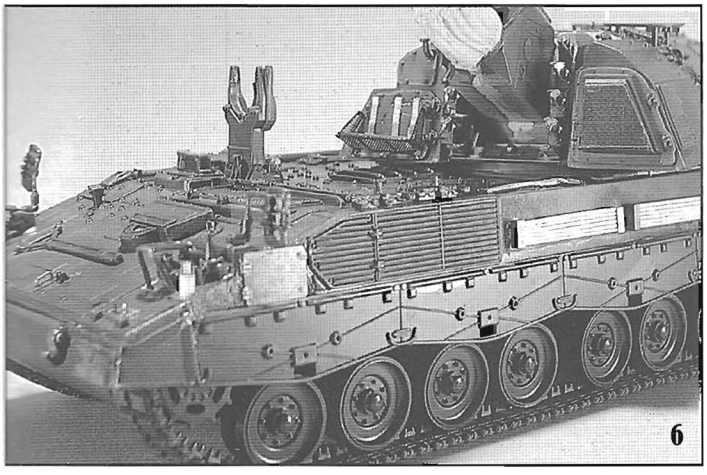
1. The kit mud flaps were replaced with the Eduard parts and were rolled up. 2. The lack of any interior detail ruled out opening the hatches, unless you're up for some heavy scratch building. 3. The top of the hull will involve the

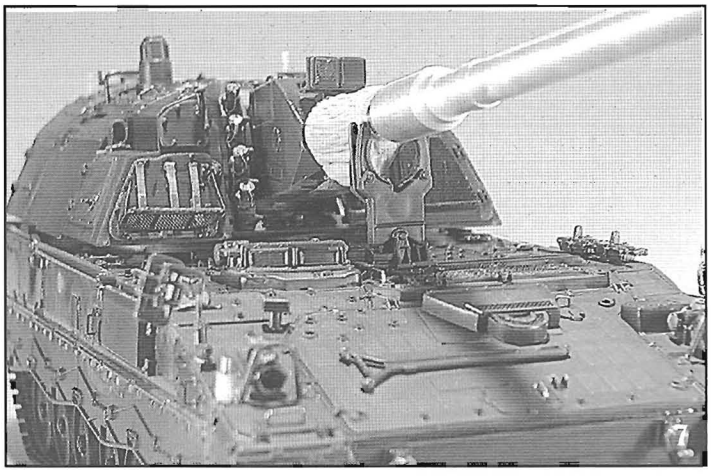












most work in the project and features some nice detail in the form of bolt heads and anti-slip panels. Revell did a nice job here. 4. The rear aerials were replaced with the Eduard mounting brackets and Verlinden aerial mounts. 5. I used a product called Magic Sculpt for the prominent canvas cover. Magic Sculpt is a two-part putty like AB, but is much easier to work with. 6. For the left side, I made two sets of gun cleaning rods out of plastic rod and the Eduard mounting brackets. 7. Eduard's set really comes in handy when tackling the front of the turret.

compared to the M109's 8. The system is capable of a 3 round burst in 9.2 seconds, 8 rounds in 51.4 seconds and a grand finale 20 rounds in 2 minutes 30 seconds.

The whole vehicle is constructed with armored steel and it shares many suspension components with the Leopard 2 (more on this later). It's powered by a MTU MT881 KA-500 8-cylinder diesel engine, it has full NBC protection, state of the art computers and electronics, and bolt-on reactive armor panels for the roof. We have one bad ass SP on our hands folks. Let's get to the kit.

Big gun, go boom

Being a fan of big guns, I was geeked up for this one. The box is big, but when opening it, I was disappointed to see that it was not full of parts. Three large sprues of green plastic make up the bulk of it, along with a turned aluminum barrel (very nice), rubber band tracks (yuck), markings for four different vehicles and comprehensive instructions. Taking a closer look at things, the picture started to come into focus. Putting it mildly: the detail was lacking. Things seemed to be overly simplified and what detail was there was inconsistent. Some areas were very nice and others were pretty weak.

The lack of any interior detail ruled out opening the hatches, unless you're up for some heavy scratch building. All of the stowage bin hatches are molded on so you can't open them up without major surgery. In addition, they are oversized and simplified. To me it looks as though Revell really rushed this one out. I give them credit for this, but with the price of kits these days, one would expect a little more bang for the buck. The bottom line here is the kit is more like a 1960's effort, more toy than a replica. The Eduard set is a must for this project, but it won't fix all of the ills. Be prepared, this kit will need a lot of love. Are you still with me?

Love me tender

Construction begins with the suspension. No big deal here, as far as assembly. The swing arms suffered from sinkholes and flash, the green plastic is very hard to clean up, which was a problem throughout the build. The only thing that seemed to work was a sharp blade, fine sandpaper and a good scrubbing with steel wool. The suspension of the PzH 2000 shares many components with the Leopard 2. Having a spare Tamiya Leopard, I thought about using the wheels, sprockets and swing arms. Most of the suspension is covered with side shields, so I continued with the clean up.

The tracks supplied in the kit are worthless. They are rubber bands in the truest sense of the word with the track pattern being cast off register, nasty little nibs that are impossible to remove and yes, more sink holes. Another problem regarding the kit tracks is their width. They are too wide and will interfere with the side shields and the guide teeth interfere with the return rollers. You get the point. Unfortunately, there are no aftermarket options out there to-date, so you are stuck.

I thought about using the Leopard 2 tracks, but they are too wide and too short. My only option was to scavenge an old Tamiya Gepard kit. The tracks fit the kit's sprocket fine, but they are the wrong style and are too short. The Gepard tracks teeth have a double point, where the PzH 2000 tracks have solid teeth. Not a good option, but I had to go with it. The Gepard tracks were super glued to the road wheels and the top return rollers leaving a gap at the top. The side shields would hide this. The Gepard tracks actually fit better as far as the width is concerned.

With the suspension out of the way, it was time to move to the upper hull and this is where the fun begins. First off, every mold on grab handle that I could find was removed with a sharp modeling chisel. Again, the nature of the plastic made it hard to clean these areas up. All of the side stowage bin hatches and associated detail was removed. To accomplish this, I rough sanded the hatches down with a Dremel disk sander, leaving some material for final sanding.

Let me save you some time here if you are using the Eduard set. Fill in all of the mounting holes for the kit parts where you plan to use the replacement parts. The holes are enormous and you will not need them. Needless to say, an intense sanding session ensued with various grades of sandpaper. Be careful when sanding the sides, I wrapped sandpaper around a small block and followed with a final scrubbing with steel wool. It is very easy to end up with a wavy surface, hence the block.

Eduard to the rescue

It was now time to start the photo-etch madness. The Eduard set provides some really good replacement parts and you will use almost all of them. I started with the hull side bins. Another warning is in order here. The fit of the side shields is weak, at best. In addition, the Eduard hatches are larger than the ones that are to be removed. I would suggest fitting the shields and scribing a line down the length of the hull sides. This will give you a guide when placing the hatches and other side details. I did not take my own advice and had some problems. The hatches were attached using liquid cement so they could be positioned and nailed down with thin super glue. All of the hinges were added at this point and the photo-etch grab handles were left off until the end so they would not get broken off during the build.

Comparing the kit to photos of the real thing, I did notice some differences regarding the side stowage arrangement. I suspect Revell based their

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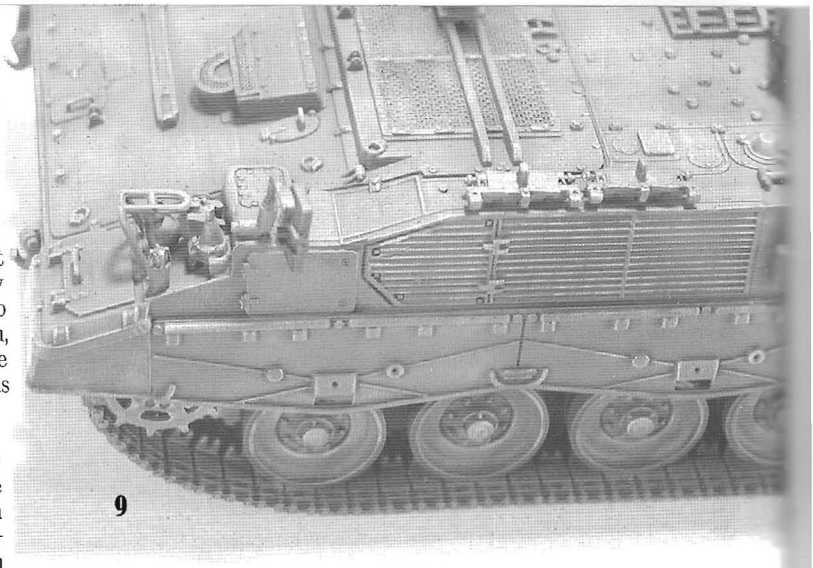

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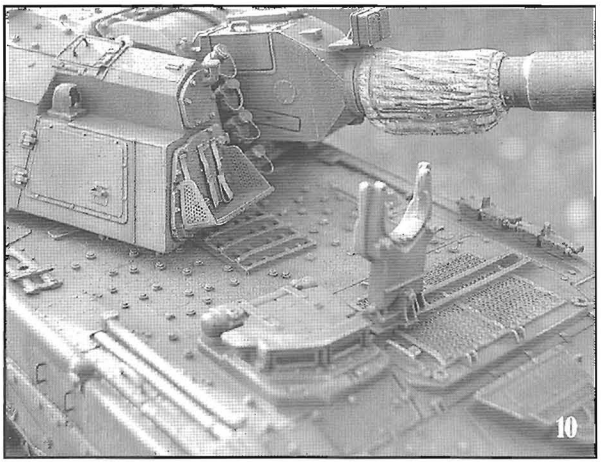
8. I opted to mark the vehicle as one belonging to 2. Batterie/PzArtBtl L 345, Kusel in 1999. 9. The Eduard engine screens are up to their usual standard and really helped to increase the level of detail. 10. The massive gun travel lock is seen here, along with another view of the handy Eduard stowage rack. 11. The headlights were drilled out for MV Lens's #159 and mounted to their fixtures. 12. The reflectors along the side of the skirts were painted with Tamiya clear orange.



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kit on a prototype and the stowage arrangement seems to have changed on the production model. The Eduard set picked up on this. Kit part #20 was moved to the right side of the vehicle, along with the tow bar. For the left side, I made two sets of gun cleaning rods out of plastic rod and the Eduard mounting brackets, as well as part #19. I believe this part is a toolbox and it was made out of plastic channel and the Eduard brackets. The kit parts were not worth saving. Eduard's part #16, the left front rectangular hatch has the hatch hinges swinging to the side rather than down. I honestly don't know who is right. The Eduard hatch looked better, so I went with it. The kit hatch was sanded off. Hopefully, we will start to see more photos of this beast in the future so we can get a better idea of what's going on.

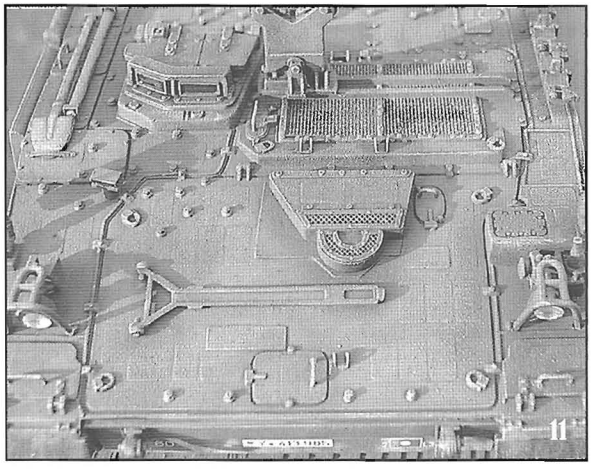
To join the upper and lower hull you have to add the back plate first (kit part #16). The locating points are almost non-existent, so the final location is almost a guess. I tacked it on with tube glue in the approximate location. While it was still drying, I fit the top starting from the front. Using liquid cement, I joined the front and worked my way to the back. The back plate was adjusted and nailed down. Bottom line folks, the fit is rough and you will need to fill. While in glue mode, I added the side shields and their fit was no better. You may find this odd, but with no links on the top track run, I figured I would get these out of the way. The shields need filler as well.

The rear of the vehicle is handled in steps #10 through #12. Again the parts are plagued with clean up issues and sink-holes. The rear sponson covers parts #32 & #33 required some widening to get them to fit. The end result yielded the need for yet more filler. I removed the molded-on grab handles on part #32 and replaced them with brass rod. The kit mud flaps were replaced with the Eduard parts and were rolled up. The kit fold-up steps, parts #23 & #24, were discarded and the Eduard steps were used. You can position them in either the up or down position. Kit part #29, the rear reflector, was reworked using the Eduard parts.

The top of the hull will involve the most work in the project and features some nice detail in the form of bolt heads and anti-slip panels. Revell did a nice job here. The Eduard engine screens are up to their usual standard and really helped to increase the level of detail. The headlights were drilled out for MV Lens's #159 and mounted to their fixtures, parts #42 & #43. The brush guards are very thick looking and I considered replacing them, but decided to move on. Part #46; the front light beacons were little blobs of plastic that looked more like scrap sprue than parts. Rather than re-working these, I remade them with plastic rod and the Eduard parts. The rear view mirrors suffered from the same heavy look, but were left. One of the areas I should have fixed was the front mudguards. These not only don't fit; they are the wrong shapes. The mud flaps on the real thing are rounded on the corners and wrap around the sides. I did not catch this until it was too late. This would be a tough one to fix. More filler!

The tools provided in the kit are very weak and lack any detail. The Eduard set provides parts to fix the shovels and the saw with the related clasps and retainers. I salvaged the front shovel, part #51, which would require an 8-foot tall scale dude to wield. The shovel on the upper deck was replaced with a MR Models white metal item using the Eduard brackets. The saw was not worth saving, so I made a new one out of brass rod with the Eduard blade and brackets. The kit tow cable was deep sixed and replaced with Accurate Armour brass cable and white metal ends. The cable was retained using the Eduard fittings.

Construction of the turret begins with joining the top, bottom and rear plate. The fit was very



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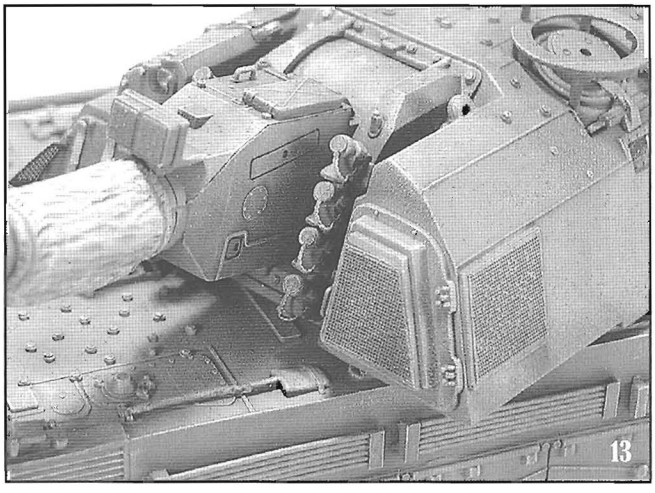

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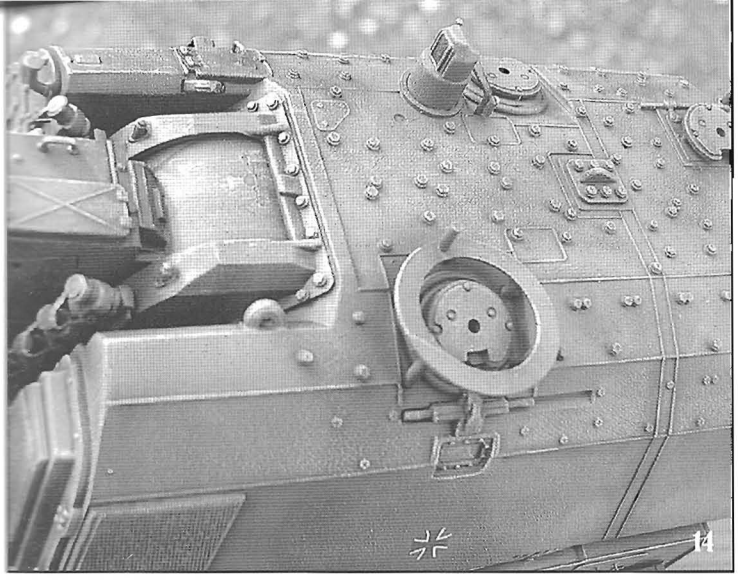


13. As mentioned, the smoke dischargers were jazzed up with the photo-etch covers and chains. A must, in my book. 14. All of the mounting bosses for the roof's reactive armor panels were present, but the kit did not include the panels. I think they would have been a cool addition. The camo scheme was painted using Tamiya's new NATO colors, green, red brown and black. 15, 16. Any grab handles I found were replaced with brass rod. The tracks supplied in the kit are worthless. My only option was to scavenge an old Tamiya Gepard kit.

good and when finished, it resembles a giant mailbox. The rear aerials, parts #68, were replaced with the Eduard mounting brackets and Verlinden aerial mounts. Thin solder was used for the wires going into the back of the turret. The molded-on side hatch handles were removed and replaced with the photo-etch parts #59. Any grab handles I found were replaced with brass rod. You will notice that some of the kit handles were used as well. All of the mounting bosses for the roof's reactive armor panels were present, but the kit did not include the panels. I think they would have been a cool addition.

For the top of the turret, I used the kit parts. The hatch detail is weak and opening them did not look like a good option due to the over simplified hinges. If I had more information, I would have at least replaced the hinges. The gun sights, MG ring and grab handle over the gunner's hatch suffer from the same sink marks and seam action as the rest of the kit. The MG itself was unusable, being over scale and lacking any detail. The Eduard set provides parts, but it is not worth the trouble. Instead of using the MG, I added a mounting tube cut from plastic rod. This model will be in transport mode for a future project.

Eduard's set really comes in handy when tackling the front of the turret. Included are more of those sexy screens and the prominent stowage basket on the right front of the turret. The kit basket is not worth mentioning I am afraid, so I won't. Brass tie-down straps were added from a spare photo-etch fret. The smoke dischargers were jazzed up with the photo-etch covers and chains. A must, in my book. The mountings for the dischargers are a total pain in the ass to clean up. I would have liked to see the Eduard boys help out here, but one can't ask for everything.

The L52 main gun is the highlight of the whole project. The inclusion of a turned aluminum barrel is a real plus. The muzzle brake is in two halves, so the seams will need to be filled. Construction of the L52 mount consists of three main pieces, parts #85, 86, 87. Liquid cement was used to achieve a strong joint. Once dried, the seams were filled with Tamiya filler and sanded down. Parts #90 & #91, the angle bracket gizmo on the front of the mount is worth mentioning. I had no idea what these parts were, so I asked some of the Intel geeks who informed me that this is a muzzle velocity sensor. Not all of the vehicles carry this sensor, usually just one per battery. In any event, it requires a conduit that runs from the sensor back through the mounting. As more detailed information becomes available, I will add this.

The gun can be made to pivot, which really helped out in the painting. To do this, two pivot brackets are pressed on the mounting assembly and glued to the massive gun retainer, part #29. The pivot brackets, parts #104 & 105, were allowed to dry and then super glue was added to the joint to increase the strength. I let this dry over night before adding the heavy metal barrel. The only thing missing now was the prominent canvas cover. The instructions suggest using aluminum foil for this. I used a product called Magic Sculpt, which is a two-part putty like AB, but is much easier to work with. Give this stuff a try, you will like it.

Can I paint it now, please?

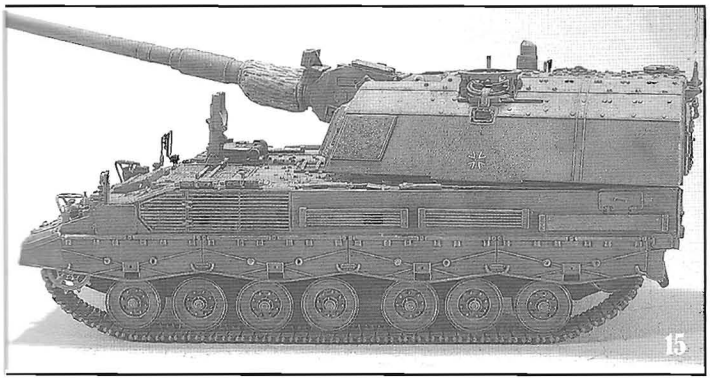
At this point folks, I took a step back to admire my handy work and I must admit that this is the ugliest build job that I have ever done. Better get some paint on this puppy fast! The entire model was washed prior to priming. I used Armory gray primer and things started looking better. The entire model was painted using Tamiya flat black, paying extra attention to the suspension and tracks. The camo scheme was painted using Tamiya's new NATO colors, green, red brown and black. The black is actually a very dark gray, for those interested. Using the box art as a reference, the camo scheme was painted free hand using an airbrush. The following wash consisted of Winsor & Newton Ivory Black and Raw Umber. Dry-brushing colors were kept to a minimum, mostly Khakis and Ocher tones with a final pass with beige to bring out the details.

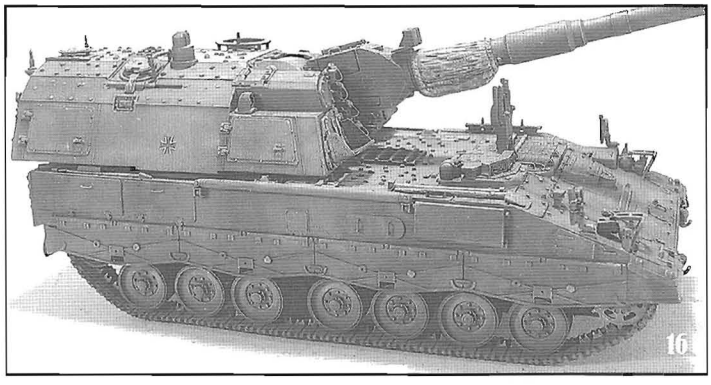
After a few days of drying time, the model was shot with Aero-Master semi-gloss. The kit decals were used and worked out fine with a minimal amount of setting solution. I opted to mark the vehicle as one belonging to 2. Batterie/PzArtBtl L 345, Kusel in 1999. A coat of Testors Dullcote yielded no silvering on any of the images. The details were painted and mixtures of red brown and black pastel chalks were brushed into the low spots to deepen the shadows. Bottom line, the model looks much better when painted.

OK, that's it for me

In conclusion, the model is very impressive when completed, but it needs a lot of work. I am usually an optimist when it comes to new kits, but the amount of work needed to get this beast presentable took the wind out of my sails at times. The lack of good reference material and after market parts, especially tracks, will not make things any easier. A very cool subject, but I think the folks at Revell rushed this one a bit. I, for one, would be happy to see them change the plastic content to something more user-friendly on future releases. With a gun that big, how can you resist? NEXT!

—Nick Vanston





MMiR RECCE

Revell of Germany Panzerhaubitze PzH 2000. Kit number 3042. Suggested retail price $39.95.
Eduard Panzerhaubitze PzH 2000 detail set. Kit number 35288. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price $19.98.

References

Journal of Military Ordnance, July 1997, Volume 7, Number 4. #ISSN 1088-0852, Darlington Publications.
Jane's AFV Recognition Handbook Second Addition, by Christopher F. Foss, Jane's Information group limited. ISBN 0-7106-1043-2.

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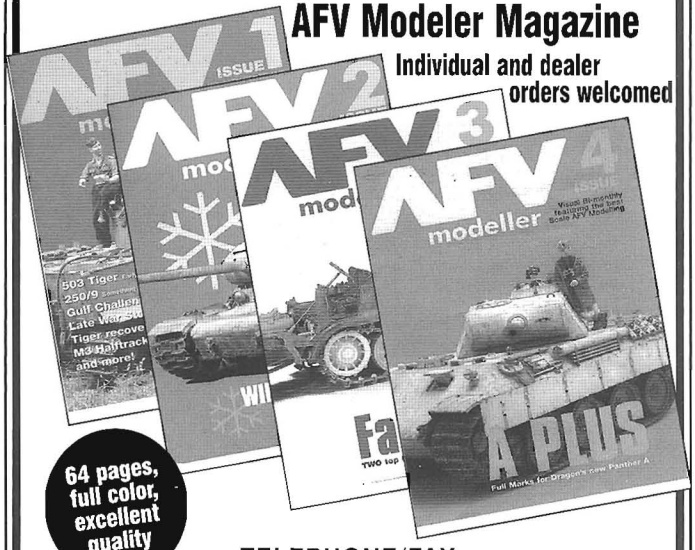

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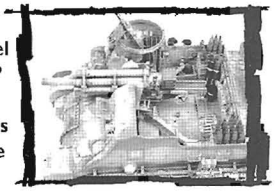

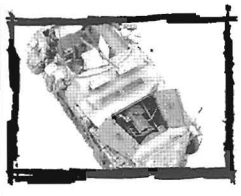

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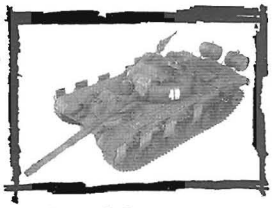

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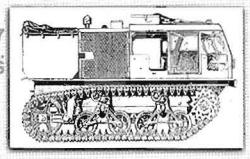
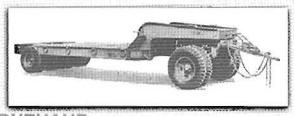


35038
Ammunition Trailer M23
with Limber M5



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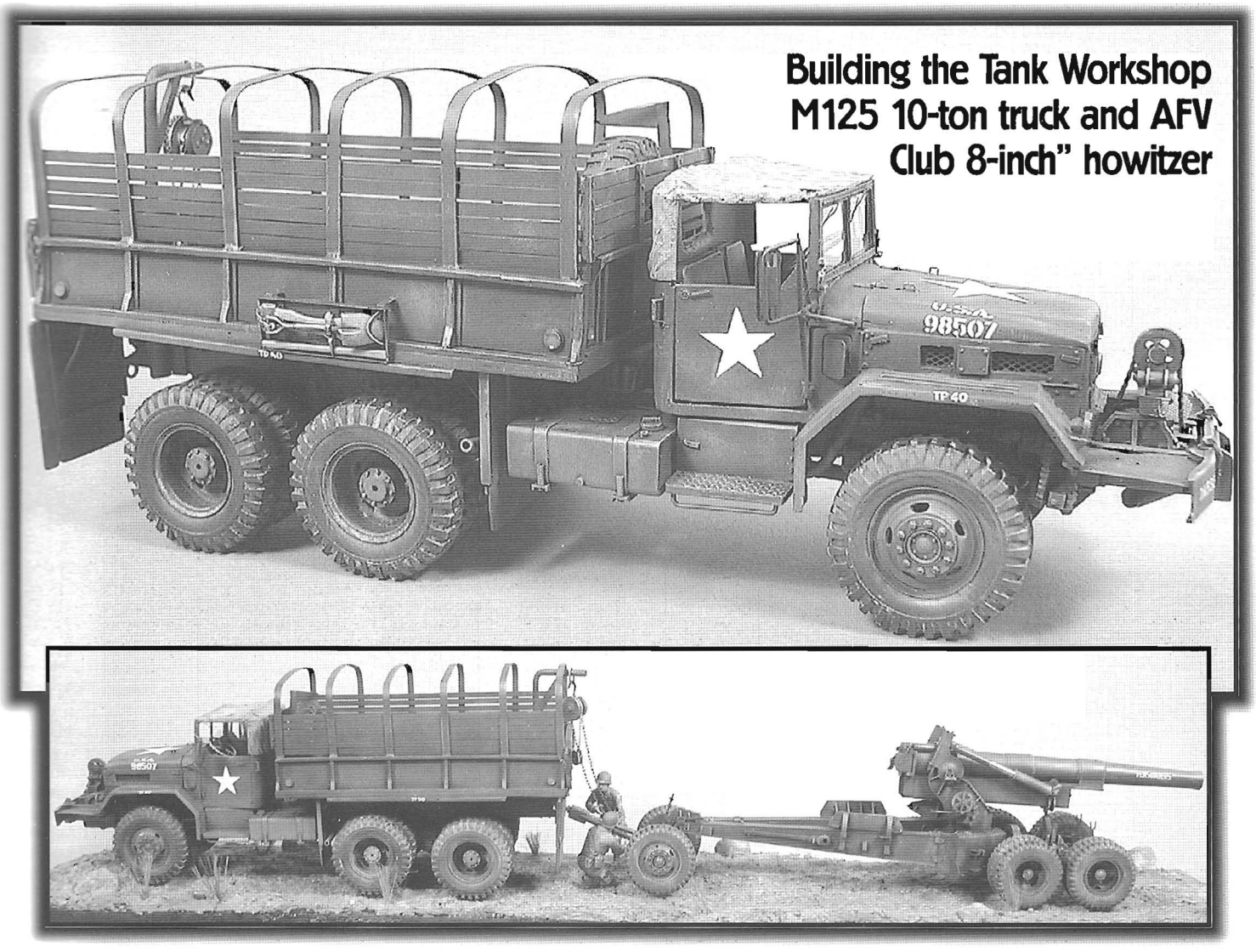
THE GOOD, THE BIG AND THE DIFFICULT

Building the Tank Workshop M125 10-ton truck and AFV Club 8-inch" howitzer



When I first opened the box for the M125 truck I knew I was in for a major project. Not only are there a lot of parts, but also resin kits of large trucks are almost always difficult to build. The AFV Club M115 8-inch howitzer, on the other hand, looked fairly easy. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I was proved right in both my guesses.

Who are they? The truck

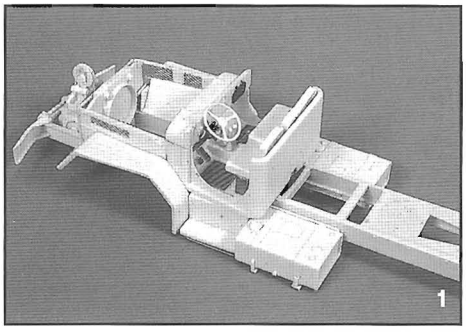
The M125 was a little known variant of the M123 tractor. The M123 tractor was the replacement for the Dragon Wagon of World War II fame. When development began on the M123, a whole series of heavy trucks was planned. The only one to see the light of day was the M125. The M125, which is a 10-ton 6x6 truck, was primarily designed to be the prime mover for the 75mm AA gun. the 155mm cannon and the 8" Howitzer. The M125 was to replace the World War II Mack NO as the prime mover for these guns. It began development in 1953 when pilot models were built under the designation of XM125. The chassis designation was M121. It was accepted into the Army and 550 were produced between 1957-58. There was also an experimental variant with an Allison automatic transmission called the XM125E1 but it did not proceed past the testing stage. It was being designed as the prime mover for the 175mm gun.

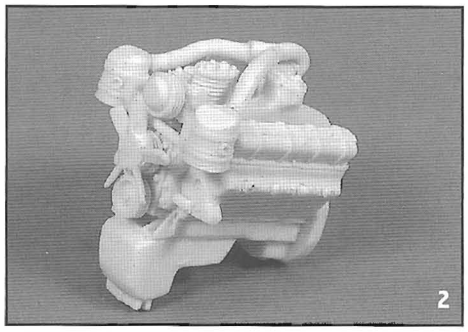
The power plant of the M125 was a V-8 liquid cooled gasoline engine, although a diesel engine version was introduced later as the M125A1. A front mounted winch was operated from a power-take-off from the transmission and controlled from the cab. There is a hoist in the front of the cargo compartment for moving the spare tire out and in. Also, another hoist is found in the rear of the cargo bed to aid in attaching the towed artillery piece to the truck. From my research it appears the stateside U.S. Army primarily used the M125, but other countries purchased a few, including Greece. There is also one report that our Army in Panama used M125's to pull the M115's but I am not sure which artillery unit used them.

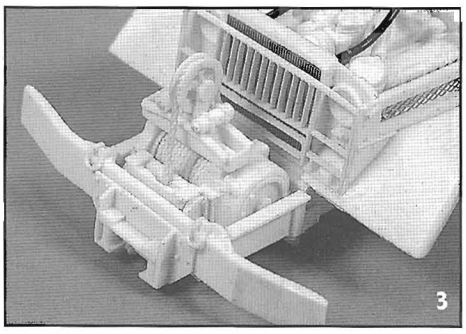
The gun

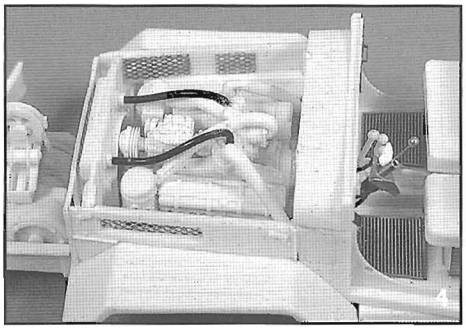
Some things in the Army never seem to age. The 8-inch howitzer certainly falls into that category. After World War I the U.S. Army started development of both a 155mm and 203mm using the same towed carriage. Funding was a problem and the development was suspended for a number of years until 1927. Development then continued until 1939 when the prototype T3 was sent to Aberdeen Proving Grounds for testing. The following year the T3 was accepted for service as the 8-inch Howitzer M1, along with the carriage, which was also the M1. The M1 carriage was also used for the 155mm Long Tom cannon. The gun tube designator was eventually changed to the M2 and a further designation of M2A1 was also used.

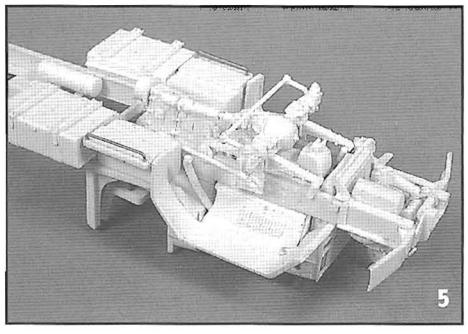
Right after World War II the Army changed the designation to M115 for the complete gun system including the M2 or M2A1 howitzer and the M1 carriage. It was eventually phased out of service and replaced by the M110 203mm SP Howitzer. An interesting side note: while serving in NATO, the M115's primary mission was to fire nuclear rounds.

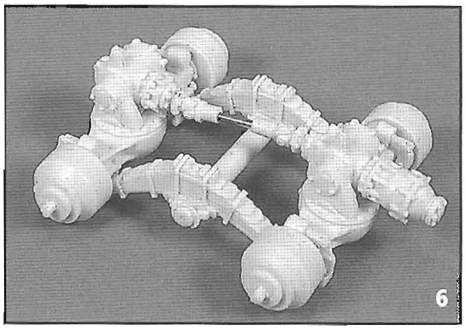


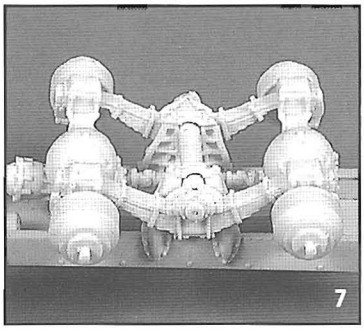


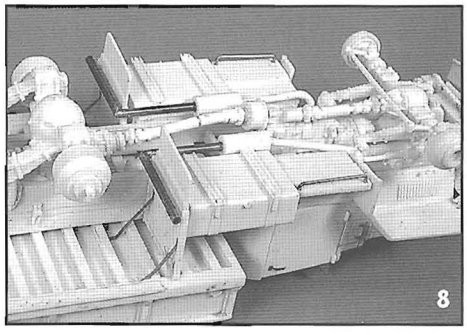












1. The screen areas were cut out and photo-etch screens glued in. 2. The engine is very complete and only fan belts and wiring need to be added. 3. The winch was a major piece of work. I added the heavy string to complete the cable. 4. The engine was installed and the black tubing was added. 5. The forward suspension is now installed. Notice the chain drive belts for the winch on the front underneath the radiator. 6. The rear dual axle assembly before attaching it to the frame. I added a short piece of brass tubing in the center to fill the gap in the drive shaft. 7. The rear dual axle assembly installed. The last part of the drive shaft was then added. 8. The exhaust pipes were added after the mudguards were on. The last two pieces are made from hollow brass tubing. 9. The basic bed has been added. Notice how plain it looks in the back before the sideboards were built.

The kits

Since the kits are so different I will describe the construction separately. The painting was pretty much the same so they are combined, as are the figures and base used.

The Tank Workshop M125 Truck kit

I decided to start with the harder of the two kits, the M125. This is one large resin kit. In addition to the resin, it includes a two-piece photo-etch sheet and metal parts for the rear view mirrors. There are approximately 213 resin parts, most of which are well cast, although there are some holes and incomplete castings here and there. As with all Tank Workshop kits, all the parts have heavy pour plugs. Be prepared to do a lot of sawing and be careful because some are very difficult to remove without hurting the parts. The instructions are probably the weakest part of the kit. They are totally in Japanese. This is a little surprising since Tank Workshop is a U.S. company. Anyway, an English translation may have solved some of my problems with the instructions, but certainly not all. The kit is pretty complete with a full engine and cab detail but, sadly, only provides an open bed without sides or top. If you want to spruce up the kit you should get a photo-etch set for either the M35 or M49A2 trucks from Eduard. I found an M49A2 one, since I am not sure the M35 photo-etch set is available yet. I was also very fortunate to have access while building this kit to a Technical Manual for the M123/M125. I feel because of the lack of information on this truck, at least in my library, plus the weak instructions, I could not have built it without this TM. A reprint of this TM is available from Portrayal Press at a reasonable price.

The basic truck chassis

I started with the front winch assembly. After cleaning up all the parts I glued them together. The only thing I added was a piece of heavy string to complete the winch cable so I could attach the cable hook.

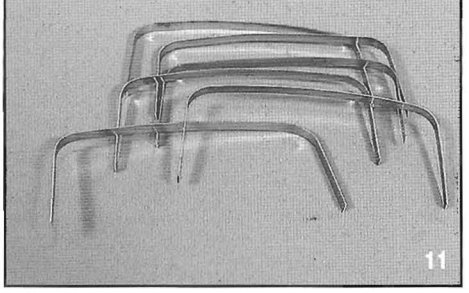
The main frame was cleaned up so I could mount the winch and front bumper. Be careful here since there are some extra pour plugs hiding in the frame that need to be removed. The winch and front bumper were then attached and I started on the cab assembly. I figured there were going to be fit problems with all the pieces used to build the engine and cab compartment and I was right. For the engine compartment I first cut out the screen areas on both sides, parts 14 and 15, and replaced them with photo-etch screens. I then continued to cut out all the main pieces and then dry fit everything a number of times until all the parts looked like they would fit. These were then glued together. There is a part 40 not included in the instructions, which goes underneath the front grill so watch for it. Another strange thing was the two photo-etch screens whose locations are not clearly shown, but I finally figured they go between the front bumper and the winch. I would gather these serve as a platform for the soldiers to stand on when working on the winch. Don't forget the drive assembly for the winch. This includes two chain drives and a drive shaft.

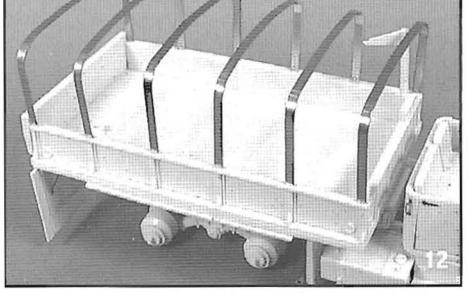
The cab

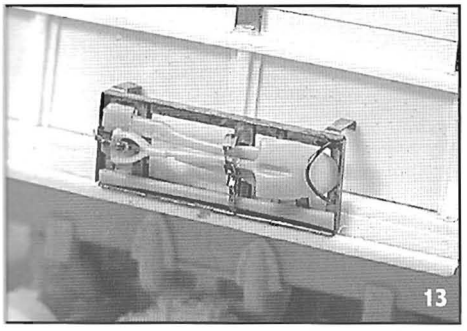
I then turned my attention to detailing the driver's compartment. First I used the photo-etch parts for the accelerator pedal and brake and clutches. For the steering wheel column I used a piece of hollow brass tubing. A few wires were run out and a turn indicator was made. There is one missing shift column, which I made out of a straight pin with a rounded head. The dashboard was cleaned up next and since I was going to use the photo-etch instrument panel and glove box, I cut off those shapes. I added the new glove box and then glued the dash on to the top of the firewall.

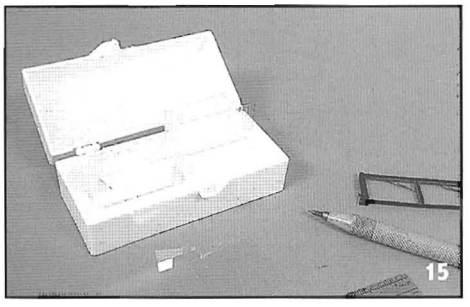
The interior seats are the wrong design. My solution was to cut off the bottoms of both seats and make brass braces for them out of spare photo-etch. The driver's side was easy since the manual had several good photos of it, but there was no information on the passenger's side, so I just made a similar frame out of brass as I did for the driver's seat.

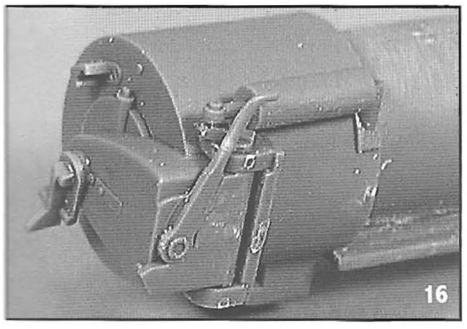
The photo-etch radiator grill was glued on the front and the headlights were drilled out to accept MV lenses later after painting. The grill was then cut out and glued on. This is a very delicate piece, which you need to take extra care with.

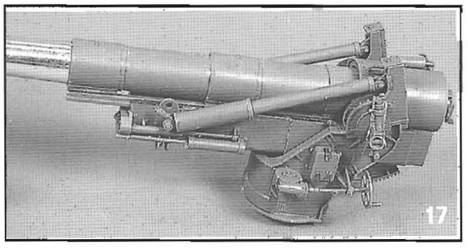


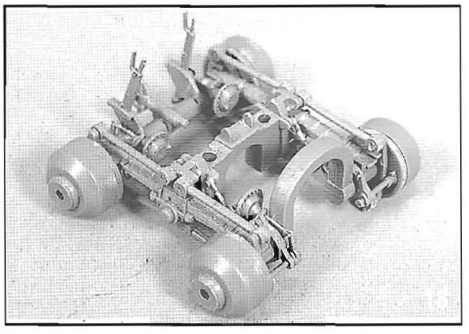












10. The two photo-etch platforms came with the kit but were difficult to install. The side view mirror supports are not complete. I added a piece of brass wire for an extra support later. 11. The six tarp frames or bows were formed out of brass strips. 12. The bows were super glued onto the bed. The hole for the rear crane can be seen, along with the forward hoist for the spare tire. 13. The pioneer tool rack was from Verlinden, since one was not included in the kit but showed up in the TM. 14. The engine compartment was hand painted and then sealed up. 15. This is the set from PBL for making real glass windows. 16. The breech assembly can be built to be open or closed. You need to decide before gluing the cylinder on the top. 17. The mount was easy to construct and a few photo-etch parts were used. 18. The cradle is now complete, except for the tires, which I left off until after painting.

The engine

Since I knew I was not going to have the engine showing, I decided to just build it stock. Well, almost. Anyway, I did not add any extra wiring, although it was tempting. Even so, the engine is quite complete, but when adding all the tubing on top be sure to keep it low or the hood will not close. Although it is shown in the instructions, there is no tubing provided for the connection from the radiator to the engine. I luckily had some soft hollow rubber tubing, which was used to complete the job. The engine was slipped in and the transmission was glued from the bottom before gluing the whole assembly in place.

Suspension

The next area was the front axle. There are a lot of parts for this guy and again the instructions are only of limited help. I found myself referring to the TM on a number of occasions. The springs were glued onto the frame and the tie rods glued to the axle. The axle was then glued on and the small shocks were added. The next item was to complete the drive shaft from the transmission to the forward axle.

The rear drive assembly parts were first cleaned up and then the springs were glued onto the two rear axles. I added the brake drums after drilling them out and attached the brake arms. The drive shaft section that runs between the two axles was glued in place with an extra piece of hollow brass tube to complete the gap. The mounts for the axles were glued on the frame and the axle assembly was then glued on. The last item added was the rest of the drive shaft, which was installed between the rear axle assembly and the transmission.

Bare bed

The bed was cleaned up and the sidepieces were glued on. I decided to glue part 105 onto the frame before attaching the bed. This allowed all the small braces and supports to be glued on without the bed in the way. There is one serious mistake, which I fell for, in the instructions. They have you glue part 112, the tow spindle mount, to the resin block, 105. Wrong! It goes on the frame, part 1.

For some reason the mount for the rear hoist is shown in the instructions but someone forgot to include it in the kit so I made one out of hollow styrene tubing. I drilled a hole up through the floor bed for the hoist to go into. I also added a support piece next to it with rivets made with a Historex punch set. The bed was then glued to the chassis. The four big mudguards were glued on and for the four supports I used the photo-etch set. These were not included in the kit, so it is just as well that they were furnished in the Eduard set. They would be easy to construct since they are just simple supports.

Now that everything was in place, I could add the rest of the exhaust system. The instructions do not show where the exhaust pipes actually go. The answer is they go behind the forward mudguards. That is why I waited until now to build them. I decided to complete the exhaust pipes with brass tubing, which I soldered together and ran out past the bed.

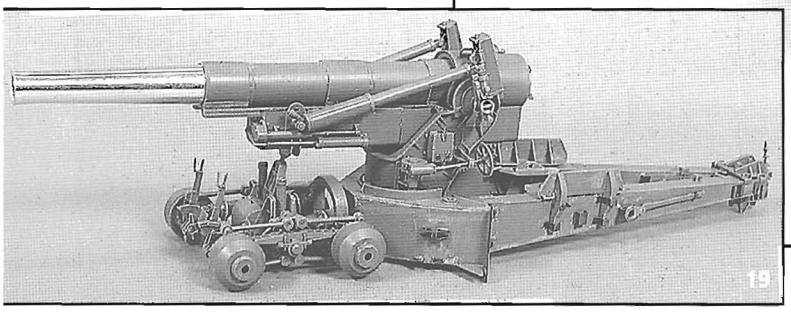
Finishing up

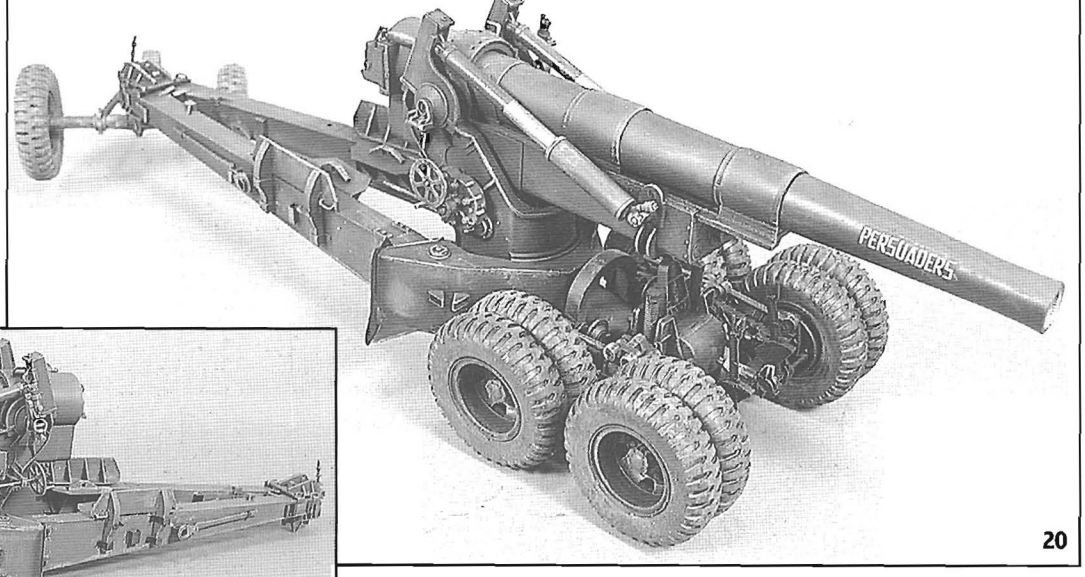
The doors for the cab were then added after using the photo-etch parts for the handles and panels. I also elected to add photo-etch vent covers, 40 and 42, to both sides of the cab. A few other small photo-etch parts were added and the side mirror braces were glued on. The kit provides two styles of side mirror braces. Unfortunately, neither is quite correct for this truck, at least according to the TM. I decided on the more complex type, since the simple two-bar one is for the M123. I did add a piece of brass wire as a third support for the mirror. I left the mirrors off until after painting.

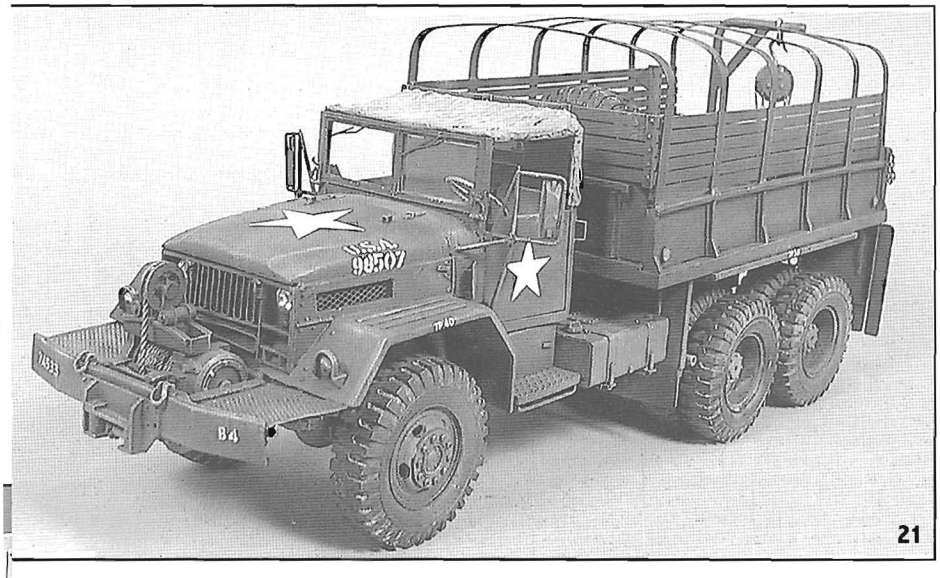
It was at this point that I realized I had a lot of extra parts that I did not have a place for. Most, I believe, are items for the M123. The windshield was cleaned up, but I chose to leave it off until after painting since there were a number of small photo-etch parts that I wanted to add after the windshield glass was in.

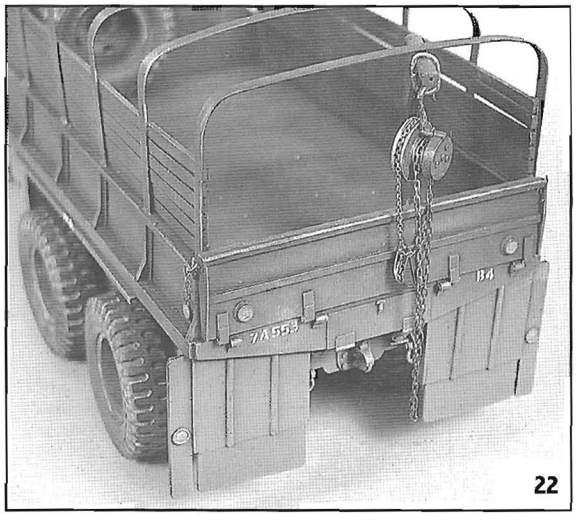
Now, I am the kind of modeler who never leaves well enough alone. I know the editor wanted me to only build the kit for this review but my old army days sometimes come back to haunt me. This is certainly the case with this model. When I reached this stage of construction I was really ready to paint it and move on, but my conscience would not let me. The problem is the kit does not include any kind of canvas or even the sideboards for the cargo bed. Now I can justify no canvas, but trucks in the Army almost never have the sideboards removed unless they are being painted or going into depot maintenance. It just plain looked naked

19. The gun and trails are all assembled then glued into the travel position ready for painting. 20. The recuperator tubes were first painted with Rub n' Buff silver, then masked off and painted separately. The tires are of real rubber and were given a light wash of Polly Scale dirt. The decal on the barrel is supplied with the kit. 21. The vehicle was only lightly weathered, since these trucks rarely had a chance to fade, but they did get muddy. The MV lenses (L185) were added to the headlights after the painting was completed. The dry transfer decals are mostly from Archer Fine Transfers. 22. The hoist is for connecting the gun to the truck. All the chains came from my spares box, since none were included in the kit.









without them. I thought about it for a long time because making the support bows was going to be difficult. After several failed attempts, I finally fell on using brass strips since they would both bend and hold their shape. I therefore made the six bows out of .016 x 1/8" strips of brass. These were glued onto the bed using superglue. I then made the sideboards out of strips of 1/32 x 1/8" styrene. These were glued together into palettes and glued to the bows. Once complete, the whole thing was actually pretty strong. The final touch was to add a pioneer tool set. I made one using the Verlinden U.S. Army tool set and glued it onto the right side.

The AFV Club M115 8-inch howitzer kit

The kit for the M115 and M59 Long Tom are identical except for the barrel. The barrel is really one of the neatest parts of the kit since it is turned aluminum with the grooves milled right in. The kit consists of three main sprues of olive green plastic plus two small sprues with the wheels and six rubber tires for the carriage and limber. The kit can be built in either a towed position or firing. There is a decal sheet with gun names for four different guns. There is a photo-etch set for this gun made by Eduard for the M59 but will work equally for the M115. This is what I used. The instructions are very complete and include painting instructions.

Easy build

The construction began with the breech and barrel assembly. The breech is operable and includes the screw threads. It is important to decide how you want your gun displayed early on. I knew I wanted the gun in the travel mode, so the breech was to be closed. The metal barrel, which actually is only the forward part, is sandwiched together between two rear parts. There were several small photo-etch parts that need to be glued on the receiver assembly. The barrel assembly was slipped into the receiver, but not glued. There is a small cylinder part C3, which gets glued on but it has a position for an open breech and closed breech so you need to decide which you want before gluing it on.

The gun mount was then glued together and a number of small photo-etch parts were added for detail. I did not use the hand wheels, since flat photo-etch hand wheels never work for me. The receiver assembly was slipped in since the top part of the mount stays flexible. The last part of this assembly was putting on the working elevation tubes. I did not glue these, since I planned to remove the upper cylinder, part C12, to be painted separately.

For the trails, I removed all the necessary bumps to make room for the photo-etch parts. I did go ahead and assemble the trails before putting on the photo-etch parts. Once the trails were glued together and dry, I went back and cleaned up the seams before proceeding. The numerous photo-etch pieces were then glued on. I found it easier to attach the large spades, A1, while putting the mounts on. This allowed them to be aligned better. If I were doing a firing position version I would, of course, leave the spades off.

The trails were then attached to the center section that the mount goes on. Be careful here. The back section to this assembly is part A33 that the instructions rightly tell you to put on later. If you get ahead of yourself however, and glue this piece on, you will not be able to get the gun mount on.

The carriage harness was then assembled, which included a number of parts. As a matter of fact, I think there were more parts in this assembly than the rest of the gun combined. There are four small support arms, B34/35, which are especially delicate, so be careful removing them from their sprue. Once all the basic pieces were glued on in step 7, I set the whole assembly aside to dry before moving on to step 8. The instructions tell you to cut off two pins on parts B27 and B28. I did on the first two I used, but after gluing them on realized it would have been helpful to have them, so I left the pins on the other two parts. There are a couple of places they tell you not to glue parts together in step 9, which if you do will make assembly difficult. However, I went ahead and glued everything and it worked fine. The harness was then glued to the trails assembly and the gun assembly was mounted last. I elected to leave the tires off until after painting.

Since I assembled my gun for travel, I skipped step 12 and went on to 13. Don't forget the travel lock, part C20. The limber and hitch plate are next to build and again, I left the tires off until after painting. I glued the trails together using the hitch plate. The problem is the instructions are not clear how this thing works. Fortunately, I had some photos I took of a M115 at the Virginia War Museum in Newport News, which showed this assembly.

same procedures and paints were used on both. I will cover the truck first, then mention the few differences for the gun.

I first gave everything a wash of warm soapy water and believe me: you need to take the time to do this with a resin kit. I then sprayed everything with Tamiya XF-1 flat black paint. This served both as a base coat and allowed me to check for flaws. To get the dark olive drab color, I mixed 10% Tamiya XF-1 flat black with Tamiya XF-62 olive drab and painted the whole vehicle. The tires were masked and the hubs painted with the same mixture. The canvas top and seat covers were painted with Vallejo khaki and the muffler and exhaust were painted with Polly-Scale panzer red brown. The engine was dry brushed with Rub n' Buff silver and then the hood was glued on.

Since this would be a peacetime vehicle the paint would not have been allowed to fade much, so I only lightly weathered it. I applied a very thin coat of black oil paint for the wash.

The decals all came from Archer Fine Transfers and include the large white stars and bumper numbers. For the unit numbers, I ended up using the 553d Field Artillery, 7th Army, B Battery. I know they had owned 8-inch howitzers during the late 50s and early 60s. However, I also know they used tracked prime movers. I could not find any units that actually used these trucks, so I fudged a little.

The windshield glass was then glued in. I used real glass for the windshields instead of clear acetate. In my darker days, before I found the true faith, I built a few SN3 scale narrow gauge railroad cars. One of the better known kit makers in that world is PBL. I remembered they had a set to make real glass windows for the passenger cars and buildings, so I ordered it. They furnish a set of .006" 1" x 1" glass squares plus a scribing tool for just under $16.00. The good news is there is straightedge and the glass breaks along the line. I glued the two windows in and added a few photo-etch pieces. The windshield and top were then glued on.

I then gave the whole vehicle a light dry brushing of sap green, titanium white and burnt umber oil paints. I also sprayed the bottom area with a very thinned Tamiya XF-52 flat earth to simulate dirt and mud. Two clear MV #193 lenses were then glued in for headlights. I also painted the reflectors first with silver, then with clear red acrylic paint.

The gun was washed and before painting started I stuffed the barrel with cotton. It was then given a base coat and OD mixture that was used on the truck. The recuperator tubes were taken off and painted separately. After the base coat was applied to them I put Rub n' Buff silver on them and buffed them. I then taped off the silver and painted the rest of the tubes with the same paint as the rest of the gun. Otherwise, the washes and dry brushing were the same as the truck.

a lot more time on it than I normally do on a model. It is a massive production effort and it needs a lot of TLC, but I think the results are worth it. The only real complaint I had was the instructions, but this is never a strong point with most resin kits. My hat's off to Tank Workshop for even attempting such a massive project. This is an unusual subject and I imagine the only reason the kit was produced is because of their M123 kit. What we really need is a 5-ton truck. Maybe some day...

The gun on the other hand was an easy build and I really enjoyed it. Except for the one area of the instructions regarding the hitch plate, everything else was a piece of cake. I have mixed feelings about the photo-etch set. I purposely used all the parts I could for the review, but I think if I were building the kit again, I probably would use only a few of them. I guess the bottom line is if you don't want to bother with the photo-etch set here, don't.

—Jim Hensley

MMiR RECCE

Tank Workshop M-125 Heavy Cargo Truck. Kit number TW 095. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price $144.79.

PBL Micro Glass Kit w/scriber. Kit number PBL 709. Suggested retail price $15.95. http://www.p-b-l.com/PBL2002/main-ws-ltm.html

AFV Club M115 8in Howitzer. Kit number AF35S06. Suggested Retail Price $39.95.

Eduard M-59 Long Tom. Kit number 35295. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price $14.99.

References

Dept of the Army Technical Manual TM 9-2320-206-12, February 1960, Portrayal Press, PO Box 1190N Andover, NJ 07821, http://www.portrayal.com/

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The King's Paladin

Italeri dibbys up a new version of its venerable M109 kit

The M109A6 155mm Paladin self-propelled howitzer is the latest U.S. Army incarnation of the venerable M109 series of howitzers. The M109 series dates back to the early 1960s, with initial production beginning in 1962. The program extended back even further to the early '50s when the development of the T196 howitzer began. The M109 series of vehicles has soldiered on for 40 years in the armies of over 18 countries. These howitzers have fired rounds in anger in many conflicts. They have also kept the King of Battle's watch over the DMZ in Korea and on the Cold War's inter-German border.

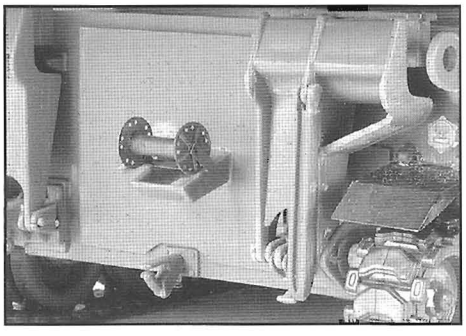
The A6 version of the M109 is not a fully new vehicle. The U.S. Army takes an older M109 and lops off the turret. The chassis goes through a full rebuild and refit program at Letterkenny Army Depot in Pennsylvania, and then is integrated with a newly produced turret made by the United Defense Limited Partnership. See, the government does try to save your tax dollars! Initial production of the M109A6 started late in 1990 and the army received the last of its Paladins in 1999. Although many countries used the M109 series of vehicles, none besides the U.S. has purchased the A6 Paladin. The M109 series has served the U.S. Army well and it will continue to do so into the future until (or if) the Crusader takes its place.

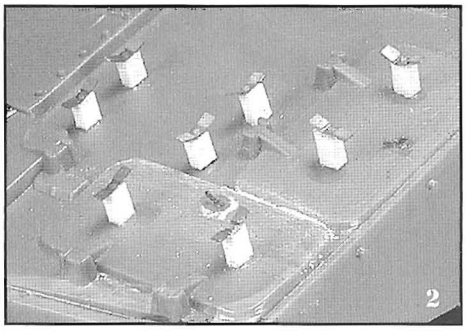
The Paladin is a 32-ton vehicle that can reach speeds up to 35 mph. It has a M284 155mm cannon that can fire a variety of ammunition. With rocket assisted projectiles, it can reach out to touch the bad guys as far away as 30 km. Some of the A6 improvements include an automatic fire control system, a turret Kevlar spall suppression liner, full width bustle ammunition storage and driver's night vision. It also has secure voice and digital communications.

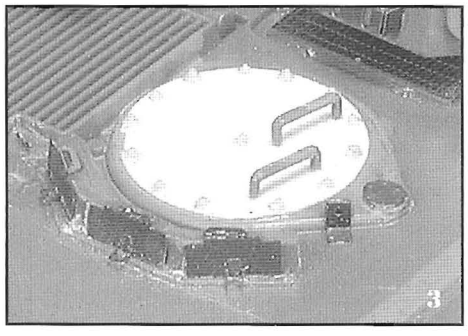
The Kit

Italeri produces many variants of the M109 series of howitzers, including the M108 105mm variant that was used by some NATO allies. The latest Italeri offering of the M109 is the Paladin. Italeri chose to go the same route as the U.S. Army by using the hull from their older kits and producing a new A6 turret. This is very apparent as the quality differs from the poor hull in the kit to the very nicely done turret. All of the problems stemming from the older kit hulls are correctable and will be mentioned later in the article. One neat part of this kit is that it is very spacious inside and would take an interior very well. The editors of MMiR had this in mind when then sent to me the very nice Warrior interior kits for the M109. However, these are for the M109A2/A3 versions of the howitzer, so I set off to see how much, if any could be used for the A6. There are not any sources that I know of on the market that give a comparison of the older M109 interiors to that of the Paladin's. So I called up the folks who manage the program for the army and asked their advice. They told me that only the hull interior is the same, the turret interior is completely different. I was able to get into a Paladin to examine and photograph the insides. I then realized that making an A6 interior from the Warrior kit was in the 'too hard box' given the time I had. I decided to use the Warrior interior sets for a later project on an A2 or A3 and drove on with just an exterior model of the A6.

Eduard makes a very nice photo-etch parts set for the Italeri Paladin. This is a must to dress out the Paladin properly and it surely enhances the detail and overall look of the model. Skybow makes a nice set of link-to-link T-154 tracks, however the kit





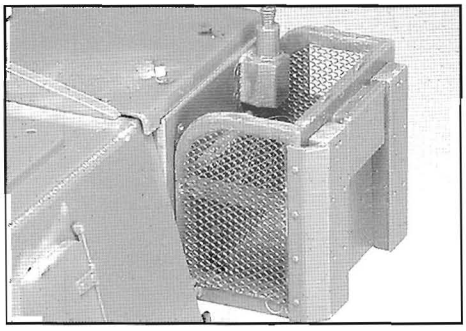


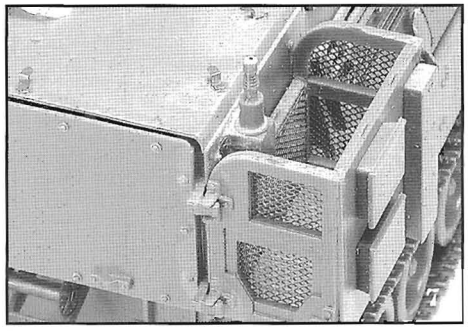
1. This is the replacement cable reel from Eduard. It's a good idea to wait on the tracks before installing those photo-etched fenders. 2. Here are mountings for spare tracks on the left front top of the hull. These are not provided for in the kit. They turned out so nice I didn't mount any spare track on them. 3. In the A6, the hatch has an extra armor plate bolted to its top. I cut a circle of plastic that is slightly smaller than the diameter of the hatch and detailed it with bolts, handles and photo-etch. 4. The kit tracks will not form the nice crescent shape that the real ones do so you have to glue them

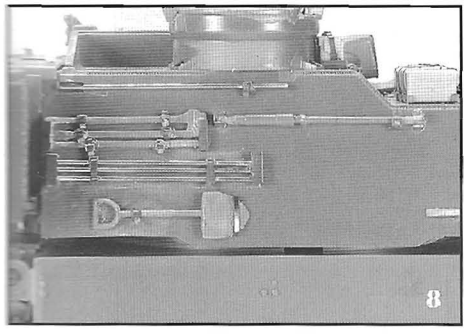
use them for handles for the various access hatches. For this purpose they are too large, so I used them for the spare track mounts by cutting blocks from plastic stock to mount them on. I've read elsewhere that the Skybow track set has these mounts in the set. However, the example I received did not have them. Nevertheless, the ones I made from the photo-etch and plastic stock turned out nice, so nice I didn't mount any spare track on them.

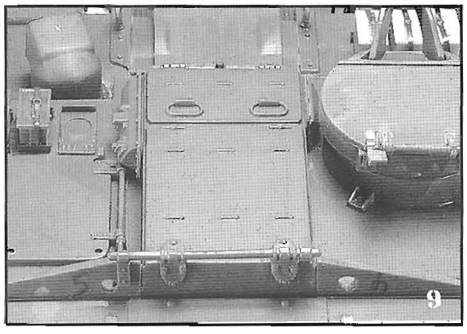
The driver's hatch needs work. In the A6, the hatch has an extra armor plate bolted to its top, which is not included in the kit. You need to cut a

down on the first and last road wheels, thus giving a slightly inaccurate look. 5. This is an exhaust not on the kit. I used a thick section of solder for the pipe with one end drilled out. 6, 7. Eduard provides very nice and easy to install screens for the storage baskets. 8. I replaced kit-supplied rods in this area with brass rods and the Eduard mounting belts. These turned out nice. 9. The molding on the turret top is not all that bad. 10. More Eduard beauty with the kit tools on the right front of the turret. 11. There are many places on the turret for .50 cal. ammo cans but not enough ammo cans are given in the kit. You'll have to scrounge some more up. 12. I love those guys at Eduard—don't you?









circle of plastic that is slightly smaller than the diameter of the hatch and glue it to the hatch top. Then you get to put a bunch of tiny bolts all around the perimeter of the armor plate. What AMS fun, eh? Then add the handles and all the photo-etch goodies and one has an accurate hatch. Eduard gives you enough stuff to make the driver's pop-up instrument panel too, but since I was making a buttoned-up howitzer, I left it off. They also include some very nice vision slot covers that dress up this area of the model nicely.

Now let's discuss the track. The kit comes with vinyl rubber full-length sets that assemble in the

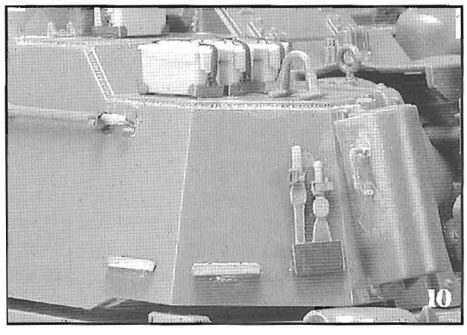
tracks are not bad and, at least to me, are easier to install. More on the track issue later.

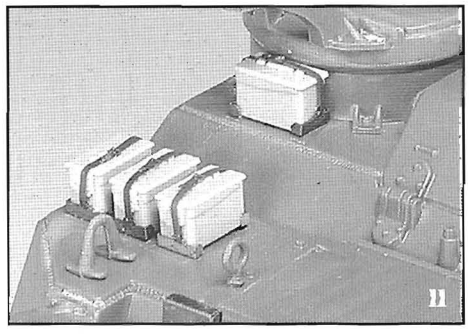
The build

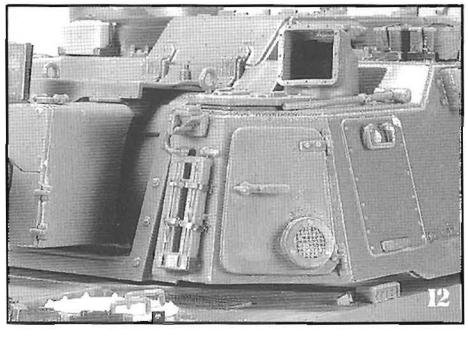
I tackled the Italeri Paladin in a pretty straightforward manner by following the instructions as given. However, if you choose to use the Eduard photo-etch you need to get out those instructions and make sure you integrate the Eduard parts into the main construction steps. The Eduard set has a lot of parts and you need to think out when is the best time to put them on.

The hull parts suffer from coming from old molds. There are sink marks on many parts and if you don't address them they will show up glaringly once you prime. Two crucial flaws are on the side armor of the vehicle hull, where there are long subtle sink marks that did not show up on mine until after I primed the vehicle. The spades in the rear of the vehicle have very bad sinkholes that will show if you put the spades in an up position. They are also very hard to deal with, especially if you don't notice them until you've installed the spades on the hull.

The front part of the hull can give a bit of trouble. First, you need to cut off the wading kit mounting points, as shown in the outbox drawing in step one. The front part of the hull (part 15A) will not give a snug fit to either the rest of the hull nor to the hull top. I suspect that this ill fit is due to the long use of the hull molds. Some filling and sanding will correct this. The Eduard instructions have you cutting off the molded-on mud flaps in order to use the photo-etch ones. You need to do so, as the molded ones are way too thick, but be careful in cutting as to not cut up the light mounts. Also, if you install



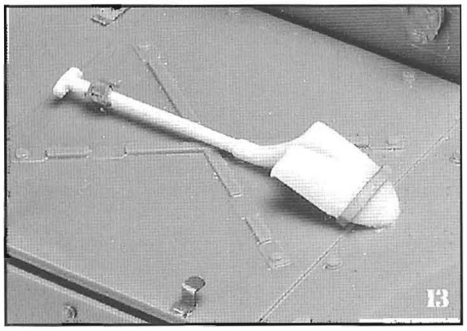


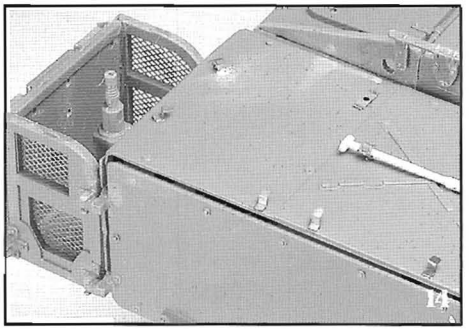


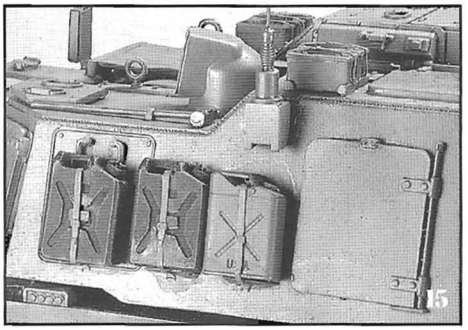
traditional manner of attaching the track ends together, then using a hot nail head to squash the connecting points permanently to the tracks. Then the tracks are wrapped around the road wheels. Note that you put the tracks on the vehicle before attaching the return roller. Now the kit tracks have three drawbacks. They are very stiff so they don't lie down on the tops of the road wheels correctly as the real tracks do. They also have seams running along the connectors and mold pop out marks on the inside. Plus they are reluctant to adhere to any type of glue known to man. So I chose to use the Skybow ones. This set has individual link-to-link jobbies where you assemble them by leaving a row of connectors on the sprue and attach the links to them. Then you put on the other side's end connectors making a complete length of track and then cut that section of track off the sprue. Seemed easy enough to me until I tried it. I had all kinds of trouble and blew a few mental fuses trying to get them

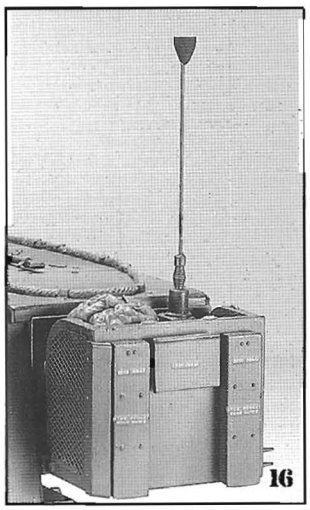
the etch flaps now they will interfere with putting on the tracks. I found this out the hard way; isn't it nice to have MMiR to make your life easier?

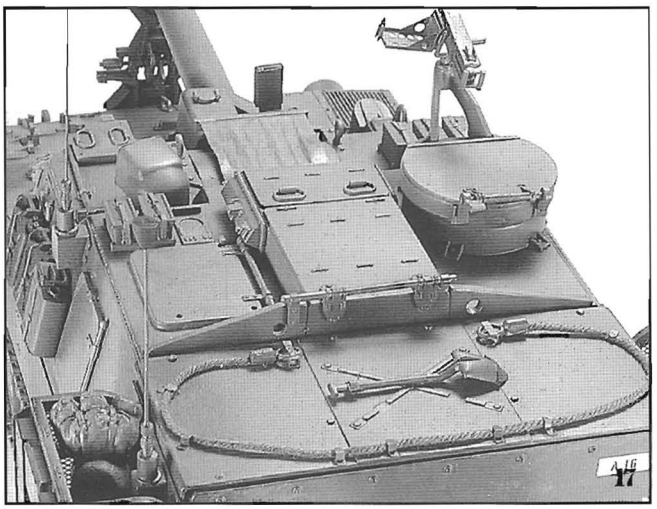
On the A6 there are mountings for spare tracks on the left front top of the hull. These are not provided for in the kit. The Eduard set has what appears to be the tops of these mounts, but has you









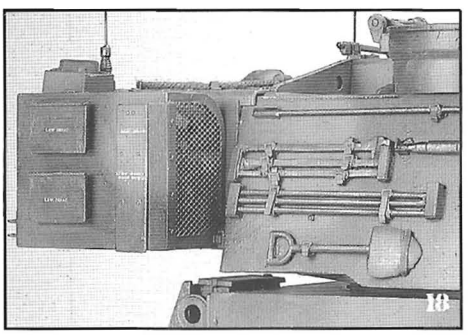


13. The various pioneer tools in the kit are also rather weak, so I replaced many of them, grabbing stuff from the spares box. I did not place the shovel where the instructions indicated, as it didn't seem to really go there. I placed it in the middle of the bustle top. 14. Eduard provides very nice mounting points for the roof-mounted tow cable. 15. The kit comes with water cans with the mounting belts already on them, but Eduard provides excellent replacement belts. 16. It turns out that this thingy is the Enhanced Position Locator Radio System or EPLRS. It usually only goes on leader's vehicles. 17. I scrapped the kit towing cable and fashioned a new one from spare ends and some ship model rope. 18. On the decals, the markings for

to work. The problem was that the set is designed to keep the tracks aligned during construction by resting the pad's guide horns on an long, off set piece of plastic running under the connectors. This plastic bar was too thin and flexed while I tried the assembly. This flexing caused the links to break off from the connectors. Then the darn things fell apart when I cut the assembly off the sprue. The final drawback is, after cutting the length of track off the sprue, you have to clean up the connectors, thus causing more breakage. Sorry, too much for this old infantryman, so I decided to see what I could do with the kit tracks.

The big problem with using the kit tracks is in gluing them down on top of the road wheels. CA glue will not hold them down at all, and five-minute epoxy works but even then they popped up on occasion. The next issue is that on the real vehicle the tracks do not sit on the first and last road wheels. But the kit tracks will not form the nice crescent shape that the real ones do so you have to glue them down on the first and last road wheels, thus giving a slightly inaccurate look. The seam problem is dealt with by sanding the tracks on medium sandpaper after they are installed. Just lay the paper flat on the table and lie the hull track sideways on the paper and sand it back and forth like it is a sanding block. But go lightly. I think they turned out just fine and I saved a lot of time and frustration than dealing with the Skybow set. If you've just got to have that perfect lay of the tracks on the bogies, then go with the Skybow. They are workable with patience. I just might have had too much coffee that day.

A few more notes about the hull. Replace the external fire extinguisher actuator on the kit, which is poor, with the Eduard one, which is nice. Open up the front hole on part 55A, this is an exhaust. Then cut off the knob on part 69E and replace it with a hose. I used a thick section of solder for this with one end drilled out. On the right



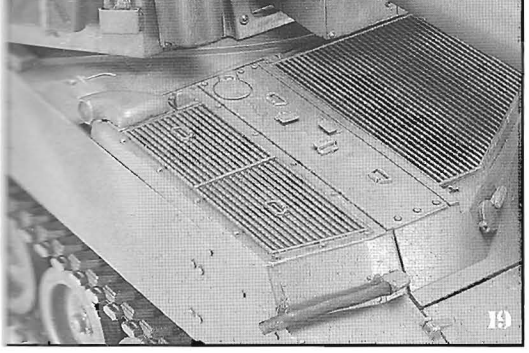
front side of the vehicle, where the hull top meets the side plate, there is a prominent seam. This is on the real vehicle as well as the kit. Do not fill and sand away this seam. I know its tough to overcome seam phobia but you can do it.

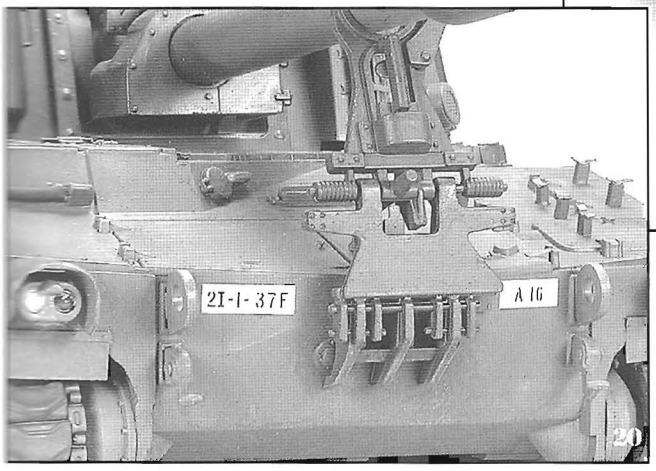
Tidy turret

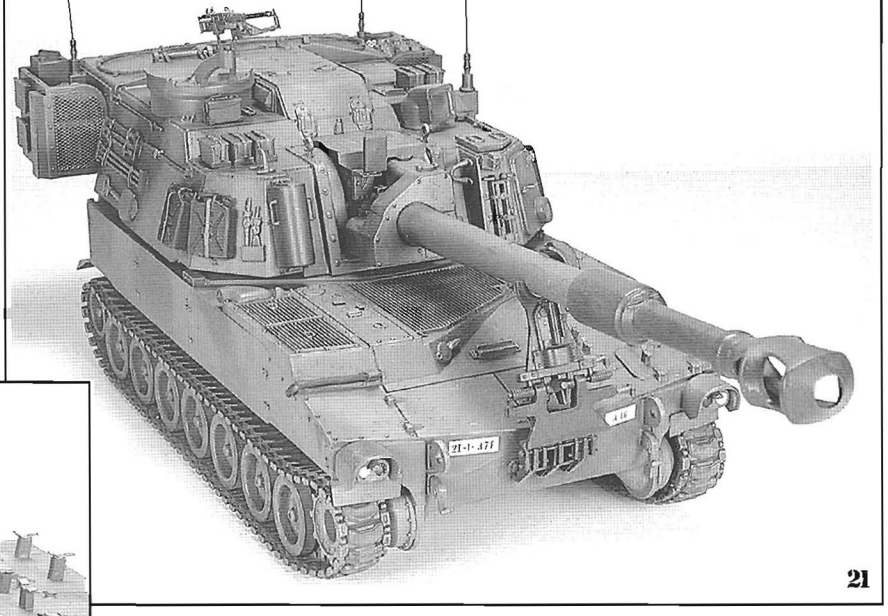
The turret is a joy to build and is a detailer's dream. But it does have some points to highlight. The first parts to be assembled are the gun mount and gun. Make sure that parts 70C and 71C are fully dry and set before proceeding. Otherwise they will keep popping apart and degrade your usually positive attitude about life. The barrel goes together OK but will need filling and sanding, especially where it's cut off of the sprue. Be careful in setting the gun into the mount. Mine fit too snug, so I had to sand down the gun's mounting point a bit. As a result, and I didn't notice until much later, the muzzle brake came out a bit crooked when you look straight at it. Rats! But after talking to some gun bunnies, they insured me that on real howitzers the muzzle break is not always perpendicular to the ground (they're probably still snickering). Take time to check this out, but I remember the gun going into the mount during a test fit and not coming back out, so I was stuck with the result.

Putting together the main turret parts and the bustle assembly can be tricky. I suggest taking your time and if you have some forms or other aids to help get 90-degree fits, use them. The bottom plate of the bustle has severe punch holes. This is not a problem if you are mounting the turret in a manner that keeps it over the rear deck, such as in a travel position like I did. But if you plan to have the turret offset in a diorama situation be sure to fill the punch holes in. Speaking of punch holes, there are some on the inside of parts 110C and 117C, also. I didn't notice them until priming and then it was too late. But since I was going to fill the bins up with soldier gear and such, it didn't matter. Eduard provides very nice and easy to install screens for the storage baskets.

The rest of the turret assembly involves adding all kinds of goodies and details. Here are some pointers: I replaced parts 94C and 90C with brass rods and the Eduard mounting belts. These turned out nice. By the way, I'm not sure if the rods in 90C are aiming stakes, cleaning rods or what. Someone on the Internet told me they were aiming stakes, but there are only three when there should be more and all the pictures I've seen seem to show them painted green or brown. Aiming stakes are red-white striped. Anybody who really knows can get a letter in the Mailbag! The kit comes with water cans with the mounting belts already on them. I chose not to use the kit's ones as Eduard provides excellent replacements. However, I had trouble finding enough cans without belts. I found a set of resin ones from a Polish company called Polop in my local hobby shop's sale bin. Also, I remember from my Bradley Fighting Vehicle days only having a vertical belt to secure water and Jerry cans, so I chose just to use the vertical belts from the photo-etch. Since finishing the model, I've seen pictures of Paladins with both single belts and horizontal/vertical ones, so do what you like. There are many places on the turret for .50 cal. ammo cans but not enough ammo cans are given in the kit. You'll have to scrounge some more up. If you have the now out of production Tamiya Modern U.S. Accessory Kit, there will be enough. Eduard provides belts for these cans too. Part 145C is a retractable cover for







21

the munitions storage boxes are incorrect. They are small and hard to read, but you know how those model contest judges are... 19. There were some molding problems with the older kit lower hull, but they are barely noticeable when the kit is finished. 20. The unit markings appear to be for a 2nd Infantry Division vehicle, which is still in Korea, as far as I know. 21. I wanted to try out the new Tamiya NATO tricolors. Their black is the best of all and replicates the hint of gray in NATO black exactly.

the gun mount. It closes as the gun is elevated and extends as the gun is depressed. But in the kit it is hard plastic and works only if you have the gun at the elevation for the travel lock. Once it's installed on the model, the gun cannot move. Take this into account if you are planing to have the gun at a specific firing elevation.

The kit .50 caliber machine gun is pretty weak. One could opt to install an after market Ma Deuce or use the Eduard parts to dress up the kit machine gun. I decided to try making the kit one work and the Eduard parts do make the gun presentable. The various pioneer tools in the kit are also rather weak. so replace them if you can. I did so with most, grabbing stuff from the spares box. I did not place the shovel, number 93A, where the instructions indicated, as it didn't seem to really go there. I took some modeler's license and placed it in the middle of the bustle top. Scrap the kit towing cable, as it is terrible. I fashioned a new cable from spare ends and some ship model rope that I purchased long ago. This rope works great for tow cable, as you can lay it out in any pattern you want. Unfortunately, I don't remember the company that made this rope, but check out the model ship department of your hobby store. Come on, nobody will tell you browsed in the swabbie section. Eduard provides very nice mounting points for the cable.

Paint, decals and antennas

Italeri sort of gives the option for a three-tone NATO scheme and a single tone desert camouflaged vehicle. But they only give markings for one vehicle and use them on each pattern. Also, the background is supposed to be desert tan, but the decals are almost white. I chose to use them anyway, as I felt they would look fine after weathering and I prefer decals to dry transfers any day. U.S. modern markings are an after-market product just waiting to be made. One other item on these markings. The unit markings appear to be for a 2nd Infantry Division vehicle. The 2ID is still in Korea, as far as I know, not in Germany, as the kit instructions state.

Another minor goof on the decals is the markings for the munitions storage boxes on the bustle storage bins. The long vertical boxes are for M72 LAWs while the other boxes are for M18A1 Claymore mines. The instructions have you putting the decals on in reverse. Well, they are small and hard to read and I had to get out a magnifying glass to realize this after I put them on the vehicle. But you know how those model contest judges are...

I'm primed

I primed the model with Floquil model railroad primer. I love this stuff, as it sprays great and dries tight. I wanted to try out the new Tamiya NATO tricolors. They paint very nice, but I am not fully satisfied with them. The green is fine, but the red brown comes out a tad too red for my taste. The actual color is more brown and duller than the Tamiya brown. However, their black is the best of all the NATO tricolor sets out there. The NATO black has a hint of gray to it and the Tamiya color replicates this exactly.

The kit and real vehicles have three antenna mounts. But I noticed that many photos show only two mounts with whip antennas installed. Usually the rear left one is empty. So I thought I would be slick and mount three whip antennas on my Paladin because it would look cool. After I did so I noticed a photo of a Paladin with a third antenna that was smaller with some sort of gizzie on it that look likes a funnel with a hockey puck on top. Well, I called a Signal Corps Officer I know and asked him "What the heck?" It turns out that this thingy is the Enhanced Position Locator Radio System or EPLRS. It usually only goes on leader's vehicles so they know where they are at all times (we all know that Lieutenants can't read maps). So I made one and put it on in place of the third whip antenna. By the way, U.S. Army whip antennas have a fiberglass teardrop end so they won't poke the bad guys in the eye. I have always been perplexed by how to make these things. Well, it turns out to be easy. Mix some 5 minute epoxy, swirl the antenna end in it then hang it upside down overnight and gravity pulls the epoxy into the right shape.

OK, let's go

The result of this labor is a very impressive model of the King of Battle's Paladin Howitzer. The kit is not a shake-and-bake by any means but is not beyond the scope of any modeler to build into a nice model. It would even be a good one for someone who has recently picked up the hobby but has enough experience to move on to minor modifications and detailing. The Eduard photo-etch kit is a must have to round out this build into an accurate M109A6. Build the Paladin and then put it next to your M1A2 and watch the Abrams have cannon envy.

—Fred Schwarz

MMiR RECCE

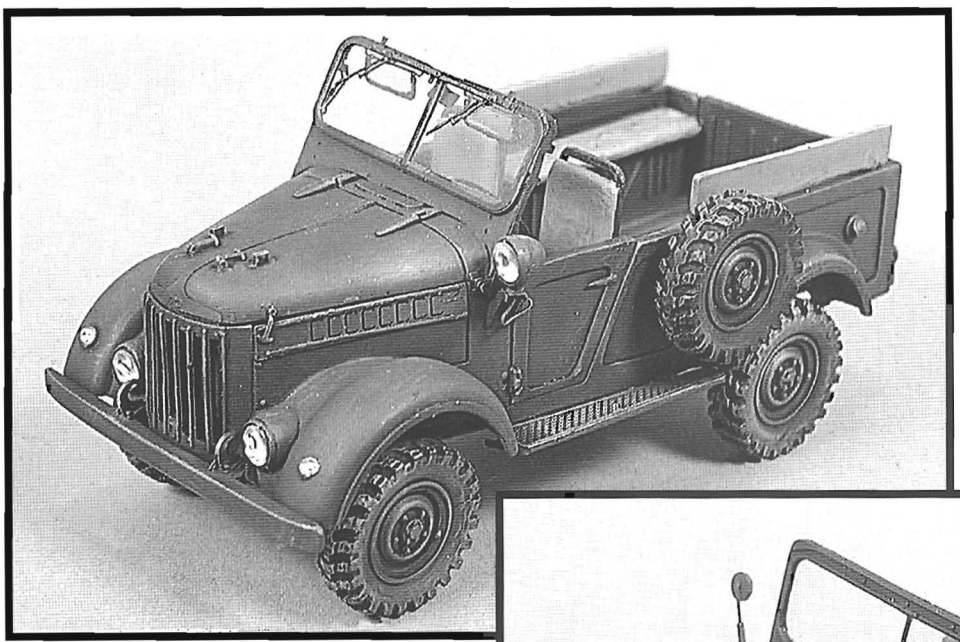
Italeri Paladin self-propelled Howitzer. Kit number 372. Suggested retail price $29.00.
Skybow T136 Track. Kit number TP 3502. Suggested retail price $14.95.
Eduard M109A6 Paladin. Set number 35 319. Suggested retail price $22.98.

References

There are none specifically on the M109A6. However, Verlinden's *War Machines no. 1, M108-M109-M109A1/A2 self-propelled Artillery Vehicle*, book no. 496, may help with the hull and other common M109 items.

EAST MEETS WEST

Building the Armo GAZ-69 and Legends M151A1 light trucks

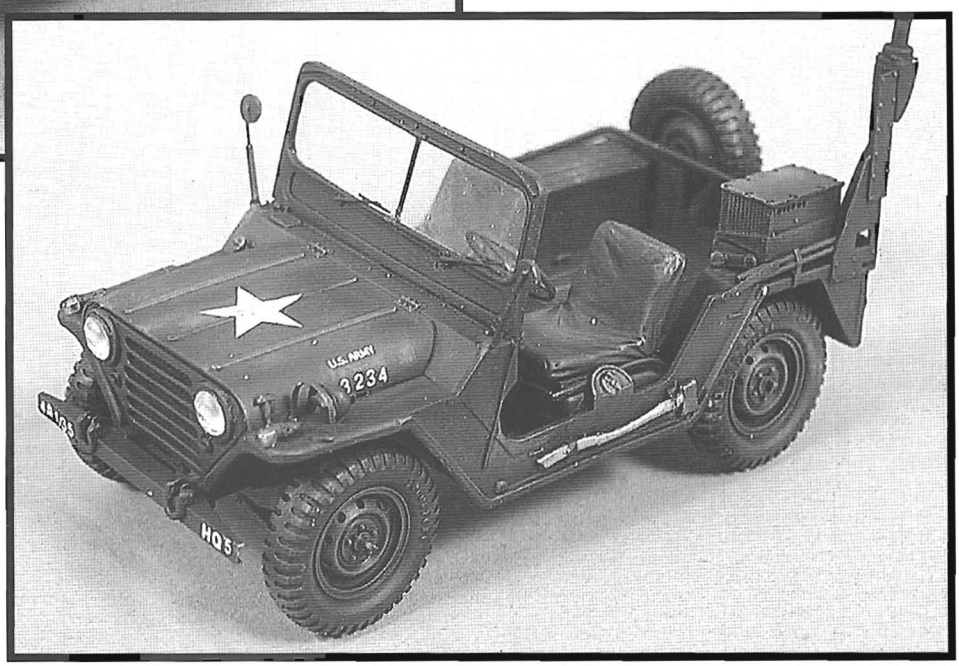


The GAZ-69 kit from Armo and the Legends M151A1 kits are both rather complicated resin and photo-etch kits and I thought they would make an interesting joint article. In addition to both being similar kits, these two light trucks served similar roles in both the Soviet and U.S. Army during roughly the same time frame. I built the GAZ-69 first, then the M151A1 a couple of months later, so I will try to separate them to keep from confusing anyone—including myself.

It's all right now—in fact it's a GAZ

The GAZ-69 was to the Soviet Army what the M151 was to the U.S. Army. This light truck replaced the wartime GAZ-67B in 1953. It remained in production until 1972 without any major changes and a total of 634,256 were produced. The GAZ-69 was first produced in Gorky City, which has been since renamed Nizhniy Novgorod. Automobiles had been produced there since 1930 and production continued until 1956, when it was switched to a new line at the UAZ plant in Ulianovsk, where it continued until 1972. When production switched, the GAZ-69 officially became the UAZ-69. The new name never caught on with the Soviets and it was always most commonly known as the GAZ-69. This was interesting to me because in the U.S. Army, we were taught in enemy identification class that it was the UAZ-69. When I first saw the GAZ-69 kit listed I wasn't sure what truck it was but I knew it looked just like an UAZ-69.

There was also a five-passenger command version of this truck called the UAZ-69A, with the main identification feature being four doors and the rear canvas sloped forward rather than vertical. The motor for the truck was taken from the "Pobieda" GAZ-M20 car and was a 55 hp gasoline engine. An odd missing item on the GAZ-69 was its side mirrors. It instead had one rear view mirror in the center of the windshield whose view was blocked when the top was on.



Don't call me a mutt

The M151 was officially known as the Military Utility Tactical Truck (MUTT) or 1/4-ton 4x4 Truck, Utility. I was assigned an M151A1 for almost two years in my early days as a soldier. To me and everyone else I ever talked to it was a "Jeep" and several other four letter words, but I never heard it referred to as a MUTT, so I will not call it that here. The M151 is the result of a response to a U.S. Army requirement from 1951 to develop a new 1/4-ton vehicle to replace the M38 series of vehicles. Ford Motor Company responded to this requirement with the development of two different approaches to the suspension system. The first had rigid axles and the other used an independent front and rear suspension. Unfortunately, they chose the independent version, which underwent further development starting in 1954. The M151 was not actually ordered into production until 1960. The M151A1 was introduced in 1964 with an improved suspension and the M151A2 was a further development, which started production in 1970. Although production started at Ford in 1963, it was switched over to Kaiser Jeep, which was acquired by American Motors in 1970 and continued production until 1988. Over 100,000 M151 jeeps were produced over the life of the program.

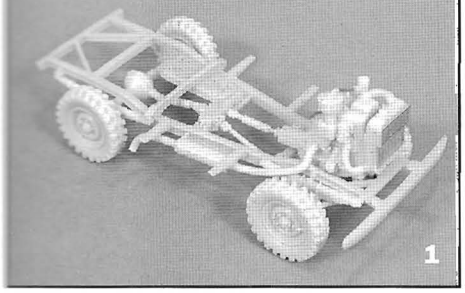
The M151 was powered by a four cylinder overhead valve, in-line, liquid cooled gasoline engine. It had a four speed manual transmission and a shift on the console to go into four-wheel drive. As a former driver of one of these guys I can testify that they were one of the most dangerous vehicles the U.S. Army every brought to service. The problem was that the independent rear suspension was extremely unstable in turns. It sat so high that even a slow speed turn could cause it to flip. This was the reason for the development of the M151A2, which was supposed to overcome this tendency.

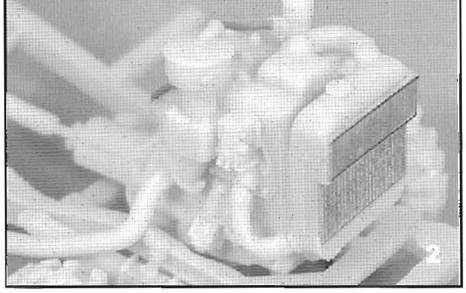
The Armo GAZ-69 kit

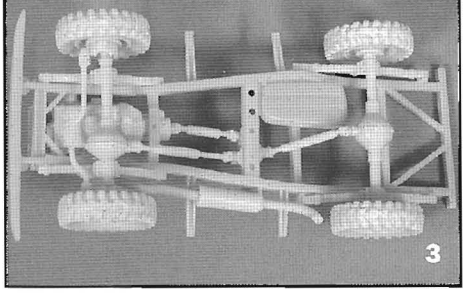
This is one of the more recent kits that Armo has produced. With each new kit they introduce they seem to be getting more detailed and ever expanding photo-etch sets. What is amazing to me is the price of their kits is still very reasonable. The kit consists of approximately 45 resin parts, most of which are very well cast. Additionally, there are approximately 113 photo-etch parts, a number of which are civilian license plates. There are two sheets of clear acetate for the windows and instrument panels are also included. The weak part of all Armo kits is the instructions. This kit is no exception and they only give you two exploded views to work with.

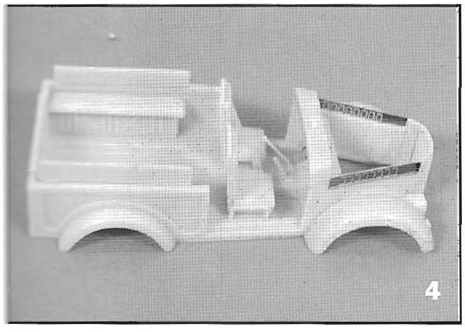
The Legend M151A1 Kit

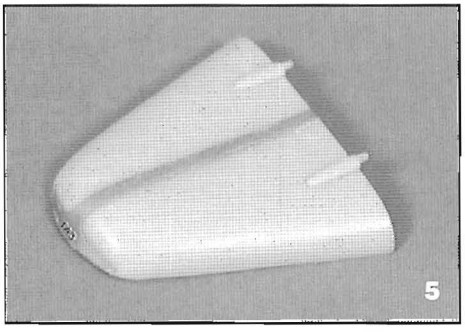
The M151A2 has been in model form for a while and some of the big guys have put out really nice kits of it, including Tamiya and Academy. To my knowledge, this is the first M151A1 to be offered as a kit in 1/35 scale. Right after building this kit I saw an announcement

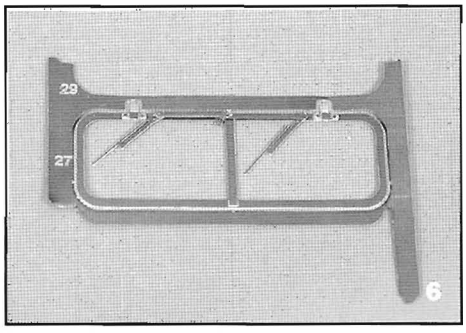


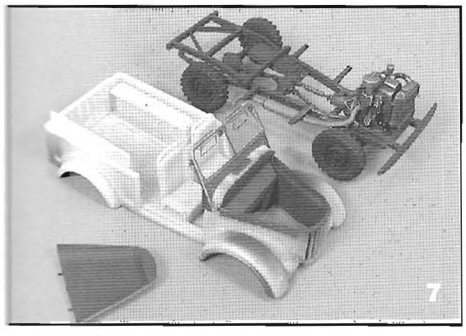


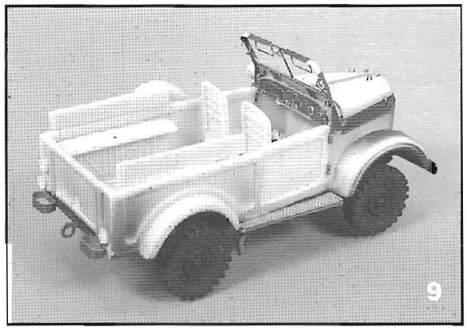




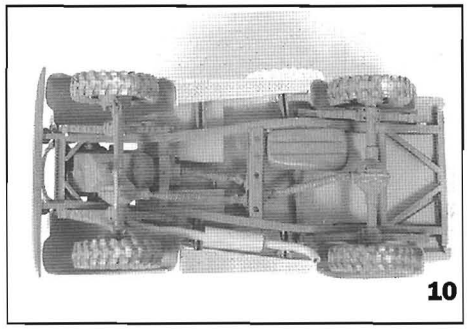








1. The basic lower chassis, including the engine, had to be completed before moving to the truck shell. The engine needed to be completed and glued on before the drive shaft could be added. 2. There are a number of pieces for the engine, including photo-etch parts for the radiator. I did not super detail the engine, since it was not going to be showing. 3. The tires are well cast. Even though a good fourth of the tire has a pour plug around it, the tread does not get destroyed when removing it. 4. The photo-etch grills on the side of the engine compartment were very difficult to out. I think they are right but this is only a guess. 5. The hood had a large pour plug on the front to be removed. There were several options included for the photo-etch piece. 6. The top windshield piece was preassembled to include the windshield wipers. It was left on the fret and painted here. It was not attached until painting was complete, because the clear acetate windshield is sandwiched between it and the rest of the windshield frame. 7. The undercarriage and engine were painted first before the shell was glued on. Flat black was first sprayed on, then black green was oversprayed on the inside of the hood and engine compartment. The engine was dry brushed with Rub n' Buff silver and the muffler was painted with rust paint. 8. The shell was then glued on and the two-piece running boards were attached. 9. The rear bumpers, tow hook and tail lights were all added next. 10. Showing the running boards and other components from the bottom.



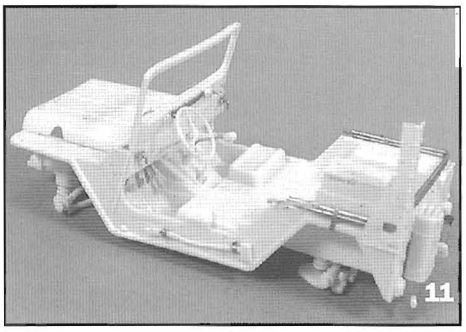
from Academy that they were releasing a M151A1, which looked just like this kit along with the M60 machine gun. When I was offered a kit of the M151A1 for a review, I jumped at the chance to build it. This is the first Legend Production kit I have built, so I was somewhat surprised at the high quality of the parts. The kit consists of approximately 59 resin parts cast in a very light gray-green color. There is a very delicate photo-etch sheet with 60 pieces, but no decals. The kit has a very detailed undercarriage, but oddly enough, no engine. Additionally, an M-60 machine gun on a pedestal mount is included. As with almost all resin kits, the instructions are the problem. They consist of a single two-sided color photocopied sheet. On one side of the sheet there are six color photos of a real M151A1 and a photo of all the parts with numbers annotated on one of them. The other side of the instructions is a series of photos of the completed but not painted model. There is no suggested sequence of construction, painting or marking, so you are on your own. The quality of the parts, as I said, is excellent and there were a few small air holes. The problem is Legend does not seem to understand about attaching very delicate pieces directly to the plugs. There were several times in building the kit that parts were damaged trying to remove them, so be careful. Also the photo-etch sheet is certainly not up to the standards of Eduard or ABER. Some of the parts were not cleanly etched, leaving jagged edges.

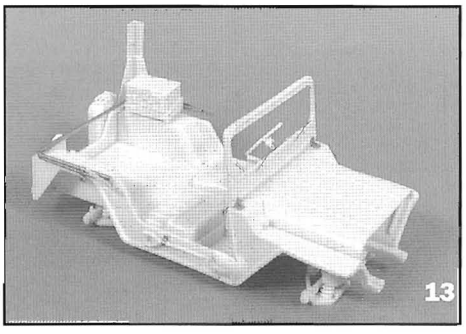
Building the GAZ-69

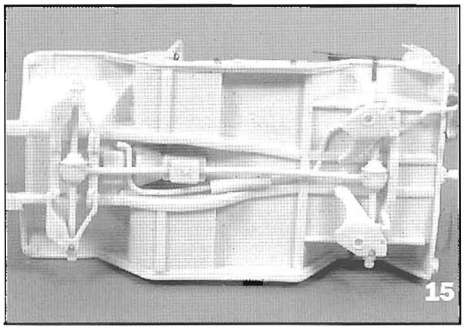
I started with the undercarriage since it seemed like as a good place to start as any. Another thing that helped me make this decision to start here were the instructions. As mentioned, there are two exploded views of the construction. The undercarriage one is the much simpler of the two. The frame is cast in one piece, but needs careful removal of the sprue from the sides. My copy had several pieces broken, which I super glued before going on. I then cleaned up the springs and glued them on. The mount points are a little difficult to figure out, but if you pay careful attention to the drawings they are pretty good with lines drawn to where the parts attach. I next cleaned up the axles and drive shafts. I had some difficulty gluing these on because getting the shafts to match their location points was not easy.

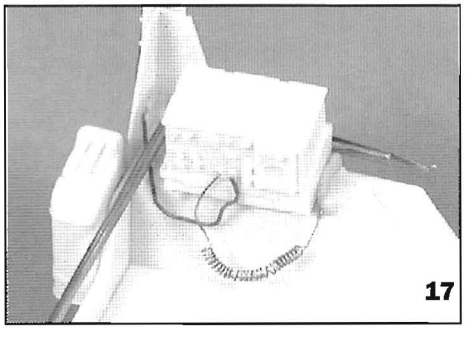
I decided I needed to jump ahead and build the engine since it needed to be glued on correctly before the drive shaft could be attached. I cleaned up the main engine block, which was difficult because the pour plug is really wrapped around it. I glued on the bits and pieces, including two photo-etch parts 8 and 9 for the radiator. I added two short pieces of wire solder to simulate some of the tubing. The completed engine was then glued to the frame.

I had a little difficulty sorting out the wheels, but finally realized the spare is drawn incorrectly. It shows a round mount stub on the body, which is not there. The spare actually has a u-shape mount molded onto it. I cleaned up all the tires after removing the pour plugs, which covers about one fourth of the tires. The good news is it does not destroy the tread. I then glued the wheels on. The rear ones are rather strange and have no location points. I just flush mounted them and since this is such a light vehicle that was sufficient

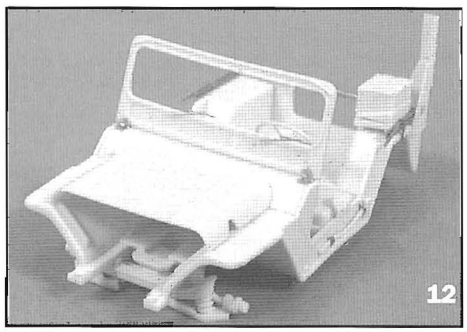


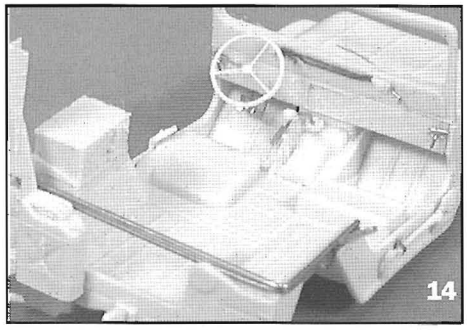


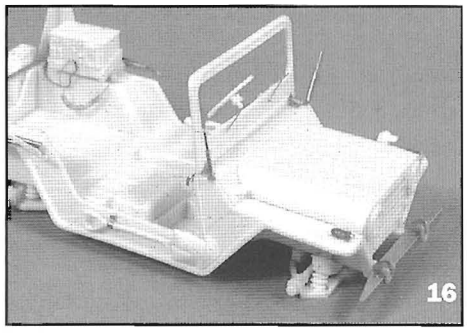


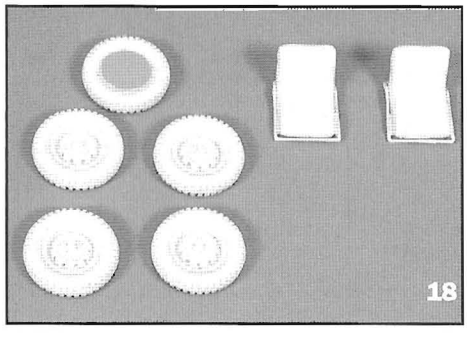


11. The photo-etch pedals were very difficult to reach. They actually attach to the underside of the dash and not the floorboard. 12. Oddly enough, there is no engine included. I added a scrap photo-etch screen behind the grill to simulate the radiator. 13. The two pieces of brass wire on the back are for the canvas top. I thought the kit-supplied wire was too thin, so I used a larger diameter wire. 14. The tubing for the windshield motors was added using thin soldering wire. The manual handles on the motors were made from brass wire, since the kit photo-etch parts were too thin. 15. The bottom is very detailed. Actually, all the parts are identical to the Academy M151A2 kit. The only trick is to be sure to assemble them in the right order. 16. The front bumper was added here and the headlights were drilled out for MV lenses. The small turn indicators on the fenders were made from spares, since I managed to lose one of mine. The small brass wire is for the ROCO orange light. 17. The radio was detailed using a handset from a Dragon set. The cord was made from thin brass wire. The lead to the antenna base was made from soldering wire. 18. These parts were painted separately. The metal disk in the spare was commonly painted with titles and other stuff to make the important guys' jeeps more identifiable. For example, company commanders and higher used them









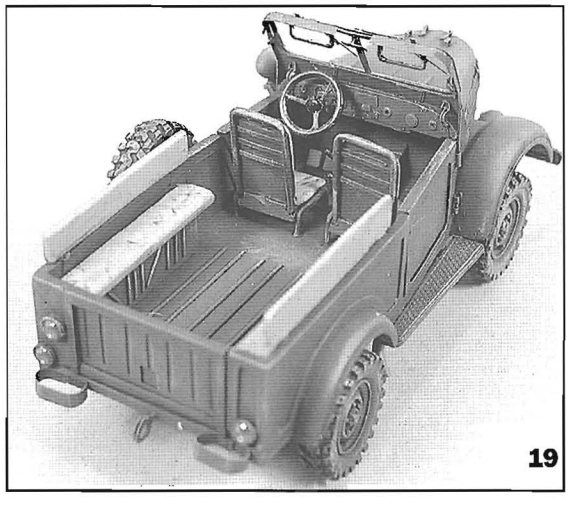
to hold. The front wheels had a vertical nub that corresponds to a slot in the wheel. This allows the wheels to be glued in a turned position, although I left mine straight. There is a small tab on the inside of the front wheels that needs to be left on. It is what the tie rod attaches to.

The upper body was cleaned up next. There is a pour plug on the rear that has to be cut off. It is a little difficult to determine how much to remove, but if you look at it there is a line that is slightly recessed. I then cleaned up the rear tailgate and glued it on. I had trouble determining what the instructions were trying to show on the grill. Apparently, they give you a choice of using the resin cast on part, or using the photo-etch part 3. After looking at photos of the real thing, it looked like not only would removing the resin grill be a real bear, but the photo-etch part is not even right. There are supposed to be vertical ridges on the main bars that the photo-etch part just has scribed lines on. So I went the easy route and just left the grill alone.

The first things I added to the interior were the pedals and gearshift. The instructions seem to have left off one piece, but there are three shifters. There are photo-etch pedals that are a little fiddly, but look good once in. I then cleaned up the seats and glued them in. One of my seats had two legs broken off, but I found the missing pieces and glued them back on. There are bench seats and backs that were cleaned up and glued on.

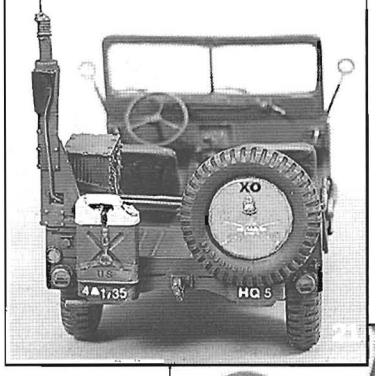
The hood, or bonnet, depending on which side of the ocean you are from, has a nasty plug on the front that needs to be removed. If you plan on using the photo-etch part 16 that goes on top of the hood, you'll need to remove the resin one. Oddly enough, there are two of part 16 on the photo-etch fret supplied and I did not see any difference. There are two sidepieces, 1R and 1L, which have two very small louvers, parts 2, to be glued on. It was not clear to me at first how to attach these parts, but I finally figured out they are glued to the outside of the chassis—I think. There is a line that is scribed on the sides that is used to show you where to glue.

The hardest part of this kit is the windshield, which will send you running and screaming into the night. The drawings are enough to intimidate all but the most brave, or in my case, stupid. Anyway, I started fiddling and gluing trying to figure out a recommended sequence for you, but I guess you just need to look at the photos for help. I did plan ahead and left all the clear plastic parts off until after painting. To do this, you have to leave off the front windshield, part 27. The reason this piece was left off is the windshield is sandwiched between it and the rest of the frame. The pieces that go on this part were added including the windshield wipers. The main piece was left on the fret to make painting easier. The dashboard was another problem, but I glued on everything except the instrument panel. This is because of the preprinted film that has the gauges on it, which I also left off until after painting. I knew the steering wheel would have to go on last because of the instrument panel, so I drilled out a hole in both it and the steering column and glued in a small piece of wire to make it easier to attach later.



I then painted the engine and frame with Tamiya XF-1 flat black. The interior of the engine compartment and hood was painted with Tamiya XF-27 black green. The chassis was then glued to the frame and I started adding the photo-etch detail pieces. The running boards were first. They are a two-piece affair. I found it easiest to glue the bottom one on first, followed by the top piece.

After careful consideration I finally came to the conclusion there was no way on earth I was going to get the canvas top on this truck. The main



spare tire. 21, 22. The stencil lettering came from Woodland Scenics dry transfer sets since they have the smallest sets. The bumper numbers represent the 1/35 Armored Battalion, 4th Armored Division. 23. The radio and antenna can be mounted on either fender. I chose the left side since that is where mine were. It made it easier for the vehicle commander to reach over and change frequencies. 24. The driver's side of the M151A1. The short shift stick just to the left of the main shift is for the four-wheel drive. 25. This GAZ-69 is at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, UK and is in pretty good shape.

problem is the front part just does not even come close to fitting onto the top of the windshield. I tried everything but the roof piece is just too small. After a lot of soul searching and actually putting the model up for a while. I finally decided I would just forget about the top. I noticed that Jadar, who produce these kits, does not have a complete model on its website, which is a little unusual, so I am wondering if anyone else had this problem. After making the decision to leave the top off construction was simple. Anyway, this is all leading to the two side doors. If you do not put the top on, you need to remove the canvas window frame that is molded on the doors. I left the windows off and made the hinges out of photo-etch parts and mounted the doors.

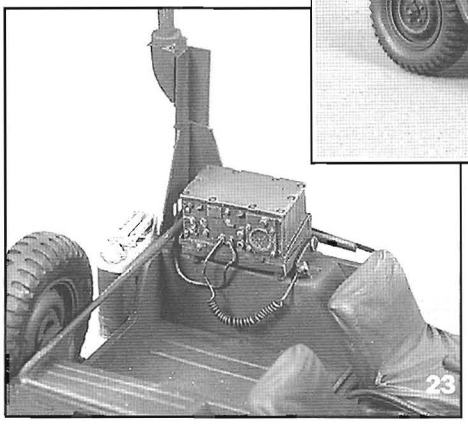
The rear photo-etch bumpers were folded, then glued to the rear. The three tail lights provided were all drilled out to accept MV lenses later. The rear tow hook is made out of three photo-etch pieces, which after assembly, was attached. The hood was then glued on since I did not intend to show-off the engine. It just isn't that good, but I can sleep at night knowing it is there. The spotlight was added, along with thin soldering wire for the electrical wiring.

Painting the GAZ

The model, dashboard and windshield pieces were all sprayed with Tamiya XF-1 flat black for preshading and to act as a primer. The tires were then masked off and the truck was painted with Tamiya XF-27 black green. The masking tape was removed and the wheels were painted green using a masking template. The seats were then painted with Vallejo khaki, although any shade of green would probably be all right. I then sprayed the whole vehicle with a satin clear acrylic to seal the Tamiya paint. I started the weathering process by applying a wash of thin black oil paint. Titanium white, sap green, and burnt sienna were then dry brushed on the chassis.

The fun part now was to first attach the clear acetate to the two visors followed by the windshield. All these clear acetate pieces were attached using white glue. The windshield assembly was then glued on top of everything. The clear acetate for the instruments was painted white on the back to make the dials standout. It was then cut out and glued to the back of the prepainted face. This whole instrument panel was then glued on and finally the steering wheel was attached.

The last step was to attach all the MV lenses, starting with clear L173's for the headlights, and clear LS23 for the turn indicators on the front. For the spotlight, I used a clear L180 and for the three tail lights I used red L117's.



Building the Legend M151A1

This is one kit you need to study carefully before beginning, since there are no steps to follow. I started with cleaning up the chassis. The difficult part here is to decide what to remove in the front. I ended up removing the block that goes in front of the transmission housing, but left the two beams sticking out the front since the front bumper attaches to them. The next area was the details underneath the dashboard/hood, piece #2. I added the photo-etch pedals, which are glued underneath this section, rather than on the floor of the chassis. The dashboard/hood was then glued to the chassis.

The rather complicated undercarriage of the Jeep is well represented, but construction is rather difficult to figure out. This becomes a problem quickly because the sequence of installation is critical. I have the Academy kit of the M-151A2 and the undercarriage is identical but not the chassis, of course. I first glued the transmission housing in, part 21. Be sure to drill out the two holes on both ends since the drive shafts will go in these. Moving to the front axle area, the exhaust pipe and muffler, part 20, were installed. The front axle, part 35, was then glued on, as was part 19, the front spring set. The two spring covers, 31 and 32, were added last.

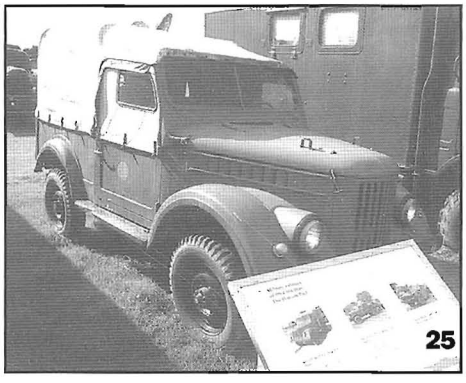
The rear of the Jeep, part 18 was cleaned up and glued on before proceeding with the rest of the suspension. I now added the rest of the exhaust pipe, part 37, whose end was drilled out first. The rear axle, part 34, was cleaned up and attached. It took a little fiddling to get it in right. The two springs, #17, were cleaned up and glued onto the chassis bottom. The rear shock absorber set, part 40, which was not labeled in the instructions, goes behind the axle and last the two spring covers, 38 and 39, were added.

The windshield frame was cleaned up and details, like windshield wiper motors, were added. There is some rubber tubing simulated on the bottom of the windshield, but it was not pronounced enough for me, so it was replaced with thin wire solder. Some of the photo-etch parts are just too thin to work with, so I replaced them with thin brass wire. An example of this was the two manual windshield wiper handles, E4. The windshield wipers were added, then the windshield frame was glued to the chassis.

The gearshift, four-wheel drive shift and the emergency brake handles were then added. In my example, several of these parts were broken, which is understandable, since they are so small and thin. The gearshift was in pieces, so I replaced it with brass wire and took the gearshift knob and glued it on the top of the wire. The steering wheel column was glued on and the turn indicator was attached next. Finally, the steering wheel was glued on.

The seats have a frame that goes underneath them, which is cast separately. This is one of those times where the weakest area of the part is attached to the pour plug. I don't believe it is possible to get these off without breaking them. At least I couldn't, so I just left off the small pieces on the front. I cleaned up the seats and glued the bottom frames on.

The frame for the canvas top was made from brass wire, which consists of two U-shaped pieces. Legend furnishes a thin wire for this, but I felt it was not thick enough to simulate the hollow tubing used in the frame. I used a slightly heavier gauge wire. The radio and antenna bases were both glued to the left side, not the right as shown in the kit, because that is where they were on my jeep. The pioneer tools were added to the sides below the doors.



The rear was treated next with the two rear bumpers, which are made from photo-etch parts. The five-gallon gas can was added, the tow hook and the small marker light located on the right side. The spare tire was left off until after painting.

The front grill was cleaned up and I chose to remove the thin backing so you could see through the grill. I added some brass screen behind it to simulate the radiator. The small marker lights were glued on and the main headlights were drilled out for MV lenses. The front bumper was formed from the photo-etch parts and the towing shackle mounts were glued on. Unfortunately, the kit does not include the towing shackles themselves, so I took some from an Academy kit.

I added a hand mike to the radio and made a connecting wire from thin brass wire. I also ran a thin piece of solder wire from the antenna base to the radio. The two arms for the side view mirrors were either missing or so broken up I could not find them. I therefore made new ones out of two pieces of brass. One was a hollow tube, which allowed the smaller top brass wire piece to be slipped inside. For the spare tire, I made a round disk to fit inside the tire. This was a common practice on some jeeps. A piece of metal, usually the top from a 55 gal. drum was cut out and painted with the unit crest and the title of the occupant. In my case, I was driving the Executive Officer for the battalion, so it was painted with XO, the unit crest and the armor crossed sabers. The unit crest for the 1/35 was an armadillo.

Painting the Jeep

After washing the jeep with warm soapy water, I sprayed it with Tamiya XF-1 flat black. It was then painted with a mixture of 10% Tamiya XF-1 flat black with Tamiya XF-62 olive drab. I then hand painted the pioneer tools, seat covers and other small items. For the purist out there, the pioneer tools should actually just be olive drab, including the metal parts. I just think it adds a little color to paint them natural wood and metal. I then added decals for the bumper markings. The U.S. Army in Europe was in the process of switching from white to black markings in 1968. Since I liked the white better, I went with that color. I remember having to paint all the markings by hand in black over the white ones. For some reason paint and stencils were very hard to come by. Anyway, I used Woodland Scenics dry transfers for the markings and an Archer Fine Transfers for the white star. I also painted the gas can yellow on the top, which was pretty common in armor units. I made up a custom decal for the spare tire using Micro-Mark white inkjet decal paper. I added the two MV clear lenses, L185, for the headlights and orange turn signal lights made from the ROCO 464 HO emergency light set.

Comparison of the kits

Both kits are difficult to build, but I think my favorite is the Legend kit. Armo produces interesting model kits, but I think they go too far with photo-etch. This is really true with this kit and I think the windshield was one of the worst I have had to deal with. Not only are there way too many pieces, but the instructions were so poor, I actually left a few pieces off since I could not figure out where they went. When completed, it looked fine without them. The top was another disappointment, which I could not fix, so I just left it off. I e-mailed Jadar-Model who makes the Armo kits to see if there were any suggestions for a fix, but they did not respond. If you are really into photo-etch, then this kit is buildable. If you aren't, I would not advise it. Unfortunately, as of this writing, there are no other options if you want this truck in your collection. The Legend kit is also a very difficult kit to build because of the very small parts. The quality of the castings is remarkable for such a small vehicle and it is very delicate once complete.

—Jim Hensley

MMiR RECCE

Armo GAZ-69. Kit 35025. Suggested retail price $30.00.
Legend Productions U.S. M151A1 Ford Mutt. Kit number LF1001. Kit graciously provided by Legend's U.S. distributor, Squadron Signal Mail Order. Suggested retail price $59.98.

References for the GAZ

Oldtimers Vehicles, A Russian site which has some information on the GAZ-69 and useful photos. http://www.autogallery.org.ru/gaz69.htm

References for the Jeep

Koran, Frantisek, and Mostek, Jan. *Ford Mutt in Detail,* Wings & Wheels Publications, Prague, Czech Republic, 2000. ISBN: 80-86416-05-4. This is really the only source you need with the excellent photographs of both the M151A1 and M151A2.

Peeters, Willy, Verlinden, Francois. *1/4 Ton M151 "MUTT,"* Warmachines No. 14, Verlinden Publications, Lier, Belgium 1993. Despite the title, it only covers the M151A2.

Adams, Deon. *The M151 'Mutt' and Variants,* Armored/Wheeled Fighting Vehicles Data #3 Armored Car Salem, Oregon 1996. ISBN: 0-9651125-3-5. Fair coverage of the M151A1 and M151A2, but the best part is on variants like the 106mm Recoilless Rifle, TOW and Ambulance variants.

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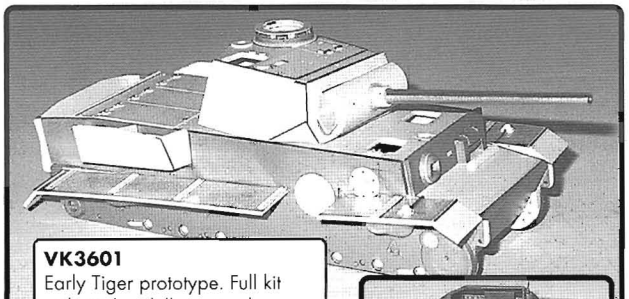

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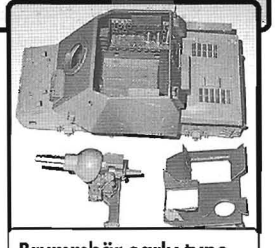

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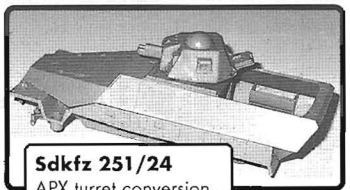

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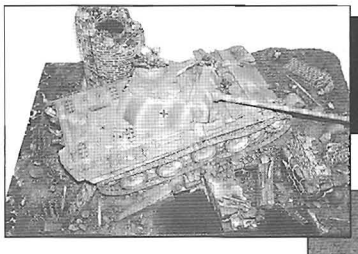

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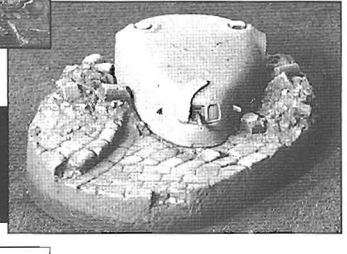

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A Peek at What's New on the Figure Front!

MiniMen

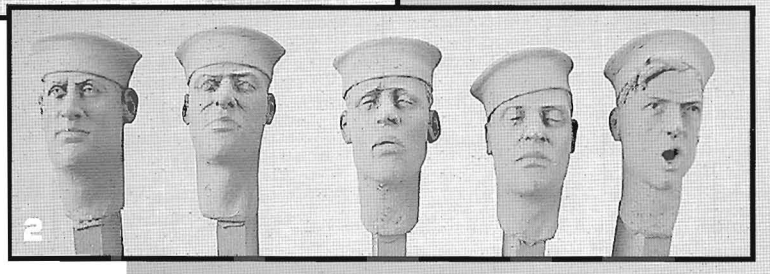
Custom Dioramics

4029, **Battle of the Bulge (1)** is a multi figure set that depicts three cold GI's around a burn barrel warming up their hands. All three wear wool over coats. Two have on rubber over shoes and the third has on your basic M1943 combat boots. Two have cartridge belts for the M1, while the other has BAR ammo pouches. The barrel is thrown right in and the set is an instant dio.

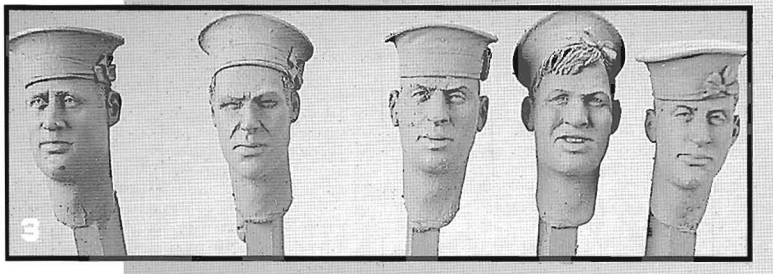
1

Hornet

We have quite an unusual selection from Hornet this time around. First up is **HUH05, Heads wearing USN style white sailor cap used by many other Navies (2)**. This is an intriguing set and it conjures up a few ideas right off the bat. With all the LVTs around these days, these could be useful for creating a dockside or beachhead scene. They would also be perfect for that 1/35th scale PT109 project we know you're working on! Think about these also for a landing craft, because sailors piloted them.

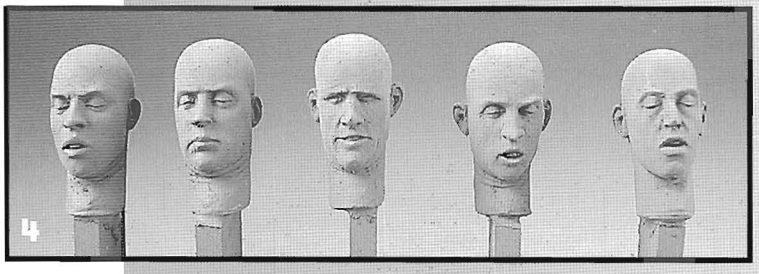

2

HBH08, Heads with Royal Navy sailor cap circa 1930 to present used by many other Navies (3), is the Atlantic flip side treatment and all the previous comments apply (except the PT109 thing). The sculpting, as usual, is some of the best you'll ever see. Sometimes it's a treat to buy Hornet head sets and just stare at them...

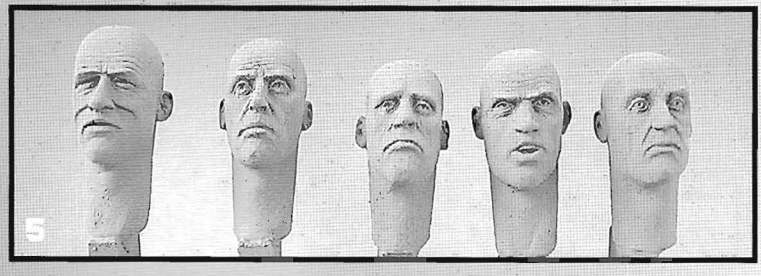

3

HH20, 5 different bare heads looking down/reading (4) are more ultra useful castings. Great for the "map read" or the combat planning scene.

HH21, Heads, gaunt/battle weary (European faces) (5) gives us five brand new faces to add to the ever growing list of unique Hornet personalities. Any of them would be perfect for depicting a combat weary infantryman.

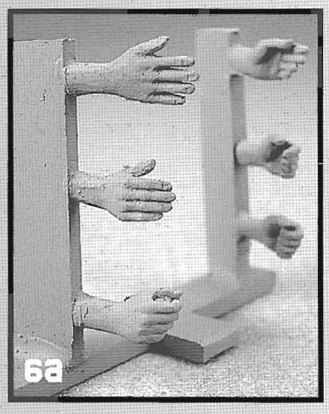

4

Now here is a terrific idea. Hornet is now offering separate sets of individual hands. The two sets are **Hands 01, 3 right, 3 left hands for 1:35 scale figurines (6a, b)** and **Hands 02, 3 right, 3 left hands for 1:35 scale figurines (7a, b)**. Both contain a variety of useful positions and we are hoping to see the series continue.


5

K-heck Model

What the heck? This is a new company that is distributed through Artisan Mori. The first product is **HD-02, Head Set (8)**. The set is composed of four nicely sculpted heads for use in any situation.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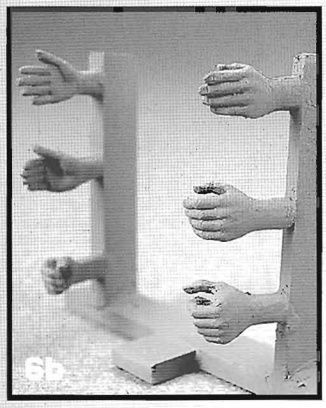
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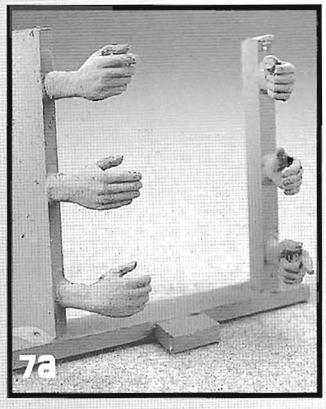
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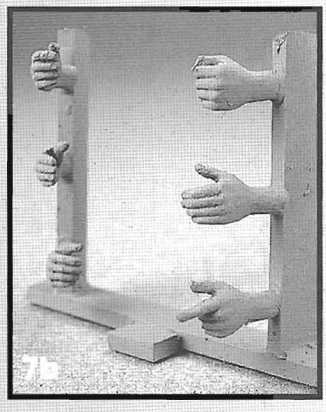
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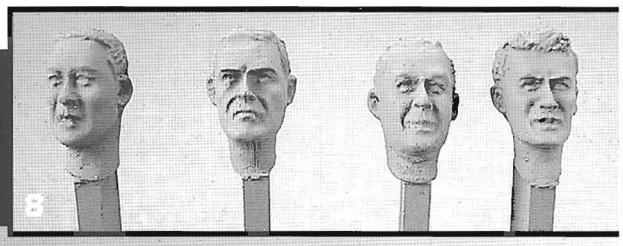
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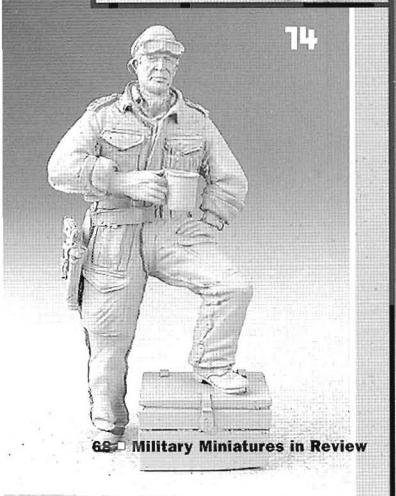
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Legends & Lore

Legends & Lore is an off-shoot of the VLS Corp and they tend to do cameo and personality figures. The latest is **LL072, General Heinz Guderian (9)**. He wears the peaked officer cap with the field gray leather great coat and brown leather belt with pistol. His footwear is a set of black leather jackboots. A good, sound figure.

Modeling Artisan Mori

We have finally begun receiving samples of this fine line of miniatures. They are been very hard to find in the states and we just know you are going to love them. Our first review piece is **NO-MG010, German WH officer (passenger) (10)**. This is a seated officer who can go in any number of vehicles. He sports a peaked officer cap. His jacket material and breeches are made of the field gray. Like most officers, he wears the high black leather jackboots. We liked his crossed arms, which give him that snooty "I'm an officer" attitude.

Every once in a while you see a figure that doesn't really look like a figure—it looks like a miniature person. The following are two such figures. **NO-MG017, German SS Major (in motorcycle coat) (11)** strikes a very casual pose with hand in his pocket and the other holding a cigarette. He wears he softer peaked cap made so by removing the stiffener. The motorcyclist's special rubberized coat is beautifully executed with the collar turned up. The overall effect is awesome.

NO-MG018, German SS operations officer (12) could be used as a companion figure. He is dressed in nearly the same manner. He is gazing at a map and wears the standard "forage" cap. A very nice map is provided with the figure, too. The forage cap is in field gray. Again, the motorcyclist's coat is being worn, this time with collar folded down.

Nemrod

We don't hear much from these French dudes, but they have quite a large line of mini-dudes. Here's the current crop.

N35034, German Infantryman Ardennes 1944 (13), is a two figure set and depicts two dudes all wrapped up for the cold and the desperate fighting of the last days. This set has an NCO and an enlisted man. They both wear the field gray, wide collar great coats. The enlisted man has a camo smock with hood worn over the great coat and balaclava worn around his head. The NCO has the 1943 pattern cap and pair of black leather jackboots. The enlisted man has a pair of leggings on his boots. The NCO has a Browning 9mm pistol and the enlisted carries a K-98 rifle. Both have a canteen and bread bag, plus the enlisted has a gas mask and a knife.

N35035, British Tank Officer 1944 (14), is appropriately decked out in an RAC beret. This tanker is wearing the Denim tank suit with leather field boots. The pistol belt has the RAC holster for the Mk.I revolver (pattern 42 RAC pistol case), which is a nice touch. Also on the belt is a pouch for 12 revolver cartridges. Topping it all off are a pair of glass goggles.

N35036, US GI June 1944 (15) is a real action pose. He is charging with his M1941 jacket with HBT trousers and leggings. Covering the 1936 model suspenders are a gas mask bag and a six-pocket cotton ammunition bandoleer. The cartridge belt has pouches for BAR ammunition, two first aid pouches, wire cutters, canteen (with cover unbuttoned) and a 1943 model e-tool. Strapped to the right boot is a M3 fighting knife. In his left hand is a medical bag and in the right is the trusty M1 Garand.

N35037, US GI w/Automatic Rifle 30th Div 1944 (16), is an excellent companion to 35036. He's wearing a netted helmet cover, M1941 jacket and wool trousers and leggings. Covering the 1936 model suspenders is a gas mask bag over the back and a six-pocket cotton ammunition bandoleer. The cartridge belt has BAR ammunition pouches, a first aid pouch, M3 fighting knife, canteen and raincoat tucked into the center in back.

Next up is N35037 (stock number is repeated by the

manufacturer), **Late War SS Infantry (17)**. This mean looking SS man looks like any one of a number of photos from the Bulge. The Dot pattern blouse and trousers are being worn. A nice touch is the collar of the field gray blouse sticking out. A balaclava is being worn under the helmet and around the neck and ears. The low cut boots and leggings are being worn. Full kit is being carried, plus a rolled Zeltbahn. The MP-44 Sturmgewehr is the weapon of choice. This is a superb pose and the box top art shows him on the back of a Jagdpanther. Sounds like a great idea!

N35038, US GI w/Automatic Rifle 30th Div 1944 (18) gives us more U.S. Army action. This time he's got the netted helmet cover and M1941 jacket with HBT trousers, which are worn unbloused over his leggings. The collar of the wool shirt worn under the jacket is sticking out. His gear includes two six-pocket cotton ammunition bandoleers and a gas mask bag is tucked under his left arm. The cartridge belt has M1 pouches, two first aid pouches, 1910 model e-tool, a canteen with the cover unbuttoned and an M3 fighting knife. His M1 has the grenade launcher attachment.

N35039, US Bar Team GI, running with rifle, (19) completes the onslaught of GIs. Like the others, he wears the M1941 jacket with wool trousers and leggings. Along with his other gear, he carries the six-pocket cotton ammunition bandoleer. The cartridge belt has M1 pouches, first aid pouch, canteen, tucked raincoat and an M1 bayonet scabbard. Watch out—a bayonet is fixed on his M1.

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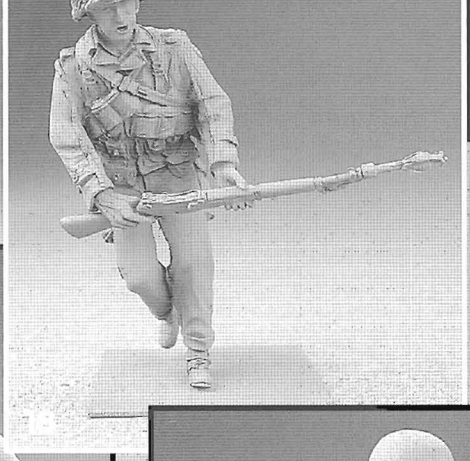

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Roy

Known more for vehicle kits than figures, Roy now offers a line of miniatures to compliment the "motorized element." **RM0011, U.S. Mechanics (20)** is two GI's slugging their tools. The first is wearing M1941 HBT fatigue cap, M1941 jacket wool trousers and leggings. He's carrying a toolbox in one hand and oversized wrench in the other—they both look pretty heavy!

The second figure is identically dressed, with the exception of his M1941 wool knit cap. He's carrying a block and tackle, and looks like he's just grabbed it or is ready to put it down. Both could be company for your Diamond-T wrecker.

RM0012, Jack with The Bottle WWII North Africa (21) is a Brit copping a fag while taking a drink. His beret could be any color you would like. He wears the standard desert shirt, shorts, socks (or hose) and short puttees. One nice touch is the cardigan worn over the shirt. The pistol belt has a holster standard for revolvers and pistols (pattern 37-pistol case) and a pouch for 12 revolver cartridges attached to the holster by two horizontal hooks.

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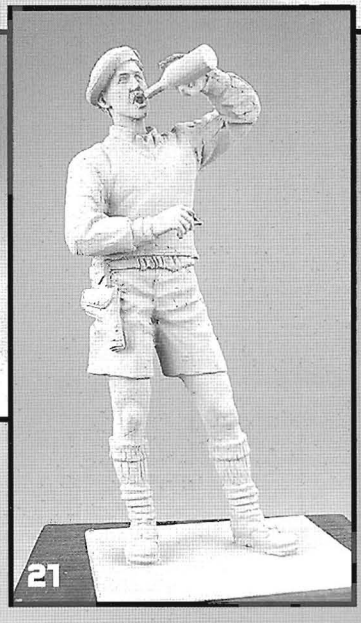
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Royal Model

Royal has been stepping up the pace for figures lately. **255, Ferdinand crew part 1 (22)** and **258, Ferdinand crew part 2 (23)** are really something special. Each set is composed of three figures especially designed to fit in and

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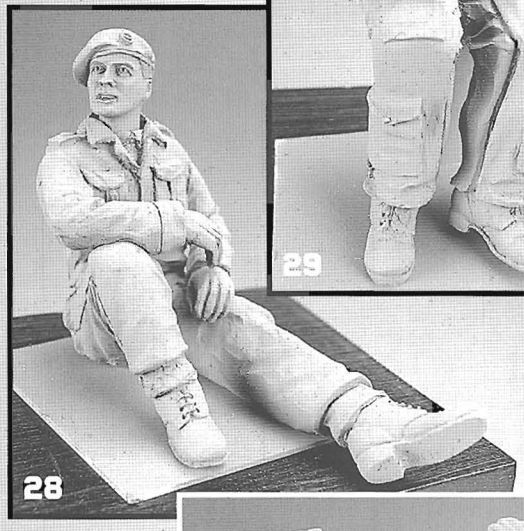


around the Dragon Elephant kit. The sculpting and execution are first rate and that "miniature person" effect is seen throughout. A variety of uniform items are seen in both sets, from denim work suits to panzer wraps and camouflage pants. The same variety is seen in the headgear. This is an excellent effort on the part of Royal and it marks a distinct difference in their sculpting style. Royal offers a wonderful detailing set for the Elephant and these sets would be the perfect way to top it off.

266, DKW German motorcycle rider WWII (24) is a great figure of a dispatch rider asking for directions. He is specially designed to fit onto the Tamiya DKW Motorcycle (not included). The rider has on the motorcyclist's coat and it is completely buttoned up and wrapped around his lower body. The gas mask and gas cape are both around the neck and sit in the middle of the chest. A map case is carried on the right side. The helmet is complete with a pair of goggles.

267, Feldgendarme WWII (25) is a standing Feldgendarme who also wears the motorcyclist's coat, this time with all the buttons undone. His helmet also has a set of goggles. The Feldgendarme gorget plate is very nicely rendered and a field flashlight can bee seen on the left breast. Tucked into the belt is the traffic direction baton and he also has pouches for his MP40. With very little effort, the rider figure's head can be altered to appear in conversation with this figure.

Tamiya

Just for the heck of it we thought we'd give you a peek at the new figures contained in **35252, German King Tiger Ardennes Front (26)**. There are three new figures to jazz up this (semi) old kit. The loader figure wears the black panzer forage cap with the dot pattern camo and a scarf around his neck. The commander and DKW rider are both wearing leathers. The commander has the peaked cap with stiffener removed and the rider has a 1943 field cap.

They are all pretty well done for plastic and we especially liked the bonus motorcycle found in the kit.

Ultracast

Ultracast does a great job with all the figures they do and the current crop is no exception. More commonwealth action this time and the first up is **35035, Canadian/British Tank Crewman Europe-1943-45 (27)**. This guy is just hanging out or taking a break. He comes with a choice of right arms, one with a cigarette or another with a drink cup. He's topped with the RAC beret and he wears the standard battle dress uniform with a leather jerkin.

35036, Canadian/British Tank Crewman Europe-1943-45 (28) continues the down time theme with a seated figure leaning against a tank. He also wears the standard battle dress uniform with a RAC beret.

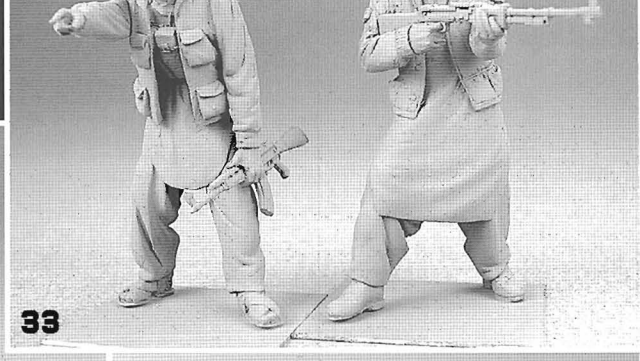
35037, Canadian/British Tank Commander Europe Late 1944-45 (29) is a stunner. He's depicted all wrapped up for the cold with the thicker, cold weather "pixie" suit. This popular item was made up of canvas lined with flannel and was to be worn over other clothes. The pose is pulled off perfectly and he would truly set-off any British tank model. He'd be a shoo-in for Korea, too.

Warriors

We've got a big crop of Afghan stuff this time around. They are as follows. **35423, Northern Alliance/Mujahideen/Taliban (79 to Present) (30); 35424, Northern Alliance/Mujahideen/Taliban (79 to Present) (31); 35425, T-55/T-62 Tank Crew (79 to Present) (32)** and **35426, Afghan Warriors 79 to**

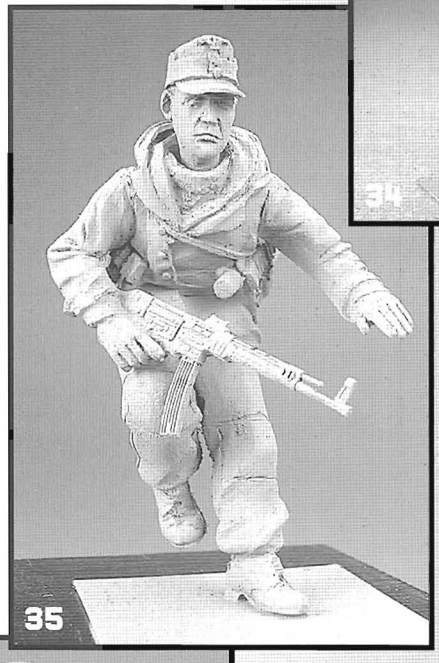
Present-Set 2 (33).

Lets take a look at these four sets in one shot. All are two-figure sets, with the exception of the tank crew, which is one full and two half figures. All of these guys have clothing representing the typical fashion of the Afghan fighter. Among the unique items seen are the puhtee (the round-shaped hat), loose fitting shirts and trousers (sometimes referred to as "Pajamas"), wrapped turban with the long tail and the traditional Afghan Chapati sandals. There is also a variety of foreign equipment represented such as Afghan army boots (or those taken from some unfortunate Russian), the ever popular U.S. style field jacket and the Russian tanker's padded helmet. The weapons are all of the Soviet type and are mainly the many different styles of the AK-47, with an RPK light MG thrown in for good measure.



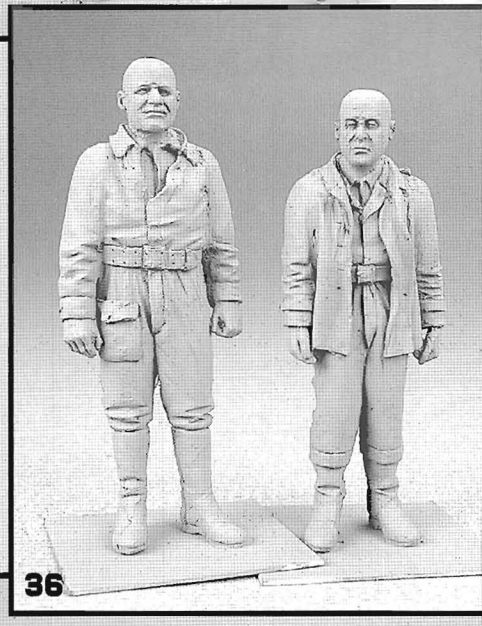
We especially liked the tank crew, which would really complement a T55 or T62 model. All the sets are nicely done and with all the Soviet armor on the way, the dio ideas are endless.

35428, SS RSO Crew (34), contains two figures, a driver and an NCO. Both are dressed in field gray blouses, trousers and forage caps with black leather jackboots. One guy is driving, while the other is craning out of the right side door to take a look behind the tractor. This conjures up all manner of towing dioramas. It's a wonder that no one thought of this before.

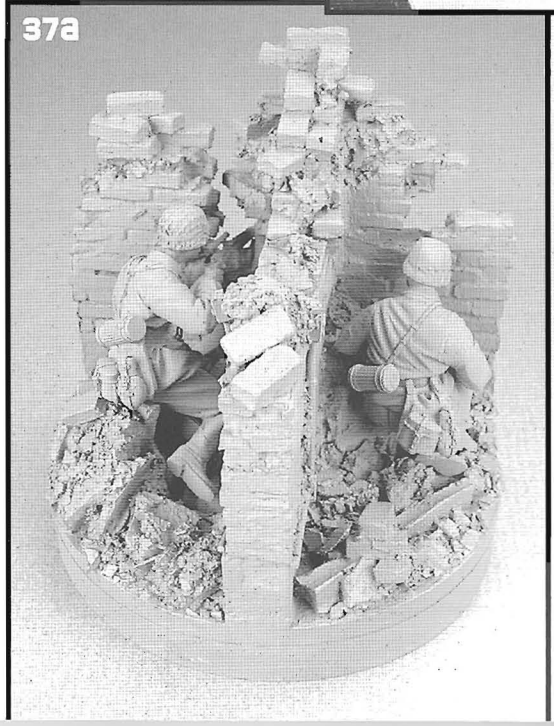


35429, SS Grenadier (35), is shown walking with an MP44 at the ready. This guy comes straight out of "The Defenders of the Reich" set (see Mini-Men in #28). He wears a 1943 field cap and a reversible parka with a sweater underneath. His trousers are the camo type, shown white side out on the box top. He has kit that includes canteen, bread bed, mess kit and gas mask.

35430, Russian POW's Set #1 (36), depicts two (recently) surrendered Russian guys. These are two really beaten dudes. One is a tanker in the black tanker coverall. The other is in the tan infantry or motorized rifles outfit. Both are bald and have their arms down at their sides.



35431, SS Sniper Team (37a & b), represents two Waffen SS snipers with a factory rubble base. This is yet another nicely done Warriors vignette consisting of a small base with bombed out buildings. Both wear the Plane Tree pattern camo smocks over the field gray blouse and trousers, with black jackboots. They both have full kit with gas mask, mess kit, canteen, and bread base. The sniper has a netted helmet cover while the spotter has a camo cover. The spotter has an MP40 and a pair of binos. The sniper has a K-98 with a turret-mounted scope. Another terrific stand alone piece.



The respective manufacturers submit all samples for Mini-Men. The exceptions are Mission Models, who submitted Modeling Artisan Mori and K-Heck, and Chesapeake Model Designs, which provided the Royal Models samples. Both are the U.S. distributors for those lines.

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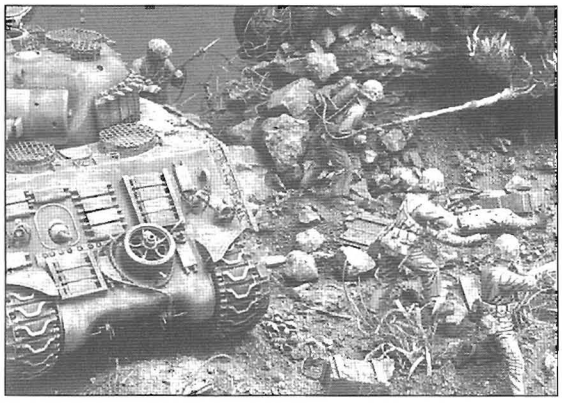

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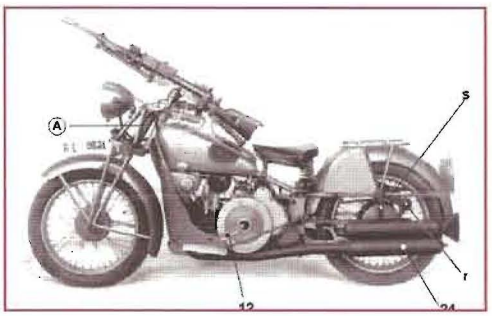

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Runnin' with the Big Dog

If you want to run with this guy, you'll need to jump off the porch

With winter raging and the apparent slow down of armor releases by the major kit manufacturers, Accurate Armour's M1A1 Ward LaFrance Heavy Breakdown Wrecker (series 5) was just the ticket for my mid-winter blues. Mastered by the king of truck geeks himself, Kay "Kay Man" Struckmeir of Germany, this is without a doubt the most challenging kit produced by our friends from the Highlands. Without getting too far ahead, this is one tough kit and not for the faint of heart, I can assure you. You will need all of your modeling skills to pull this one off and perhaps a few of someone else's. I can promise you this, gentle reader, if you make it through this one, you will think twice about building another. On with the show.

When the war started it was clear that many manufacturers would need to be brought in to meet the demand for heavy wreckers. The Ward LaFrance Company of New York was contracted to produce the first 69 using a Gar Wood manual crane. This vehicle was designated Model 1000 and some 1,554 units were eventually produced. In 1941, in an effort to augment production, the Kenworth Company of Seattle was contracted to produce an additional 330 vehicles that they designated Model 570. This was followed by the Model 571 of which another 100 were produced. The Kenworth Company was allowed some latitude as far as the design was concerned and this was mostly in the area of styling. You can recognize the two different designs by the cab.

In 1943 the M1 was standardized to a common design and designated M1A1 6x6 Heavy Wrecker. The new design went a long way to keep the vehicles the same. The hard top cab was replaced with a soft-topped open cab and a Gar Wood 5-ton crane powered by the vehicle's engine. The two manufacturers kept their own model designation, for internal purposes I would imagine. WLF designated theirs Model 1000 Series 5 early and late, while Kenworth designated theirs the Model 573.

Even with the standardization you can still differentiate the WLF from the Kenworth by the radiator and brush guard. The Kenworth radiator is straight across the top, while the WLF gently angles from each side of centerline. When looking at photos of restored vehicles you still have to be careful, things often got swapped around making a positive identification almost impossible. I can honestly say that our subject is a WLF based on a vehicle in the Netherlands that saw service with the French Army. Confused yet? Me too.

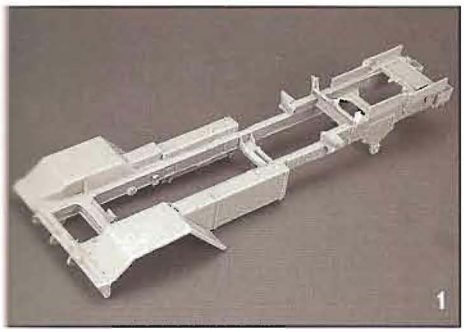
Although under powered and expensive for the time, the M1A1 proved a rugged and reliable vehicle and served with distinction, often times being used in roles that far exceeded the manufacturer's design limits. A mighty subject indeed, so lets look at the kit.

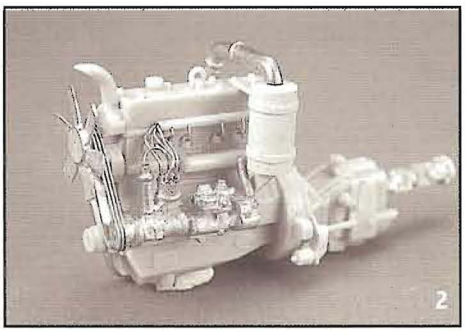
And now, on with our show

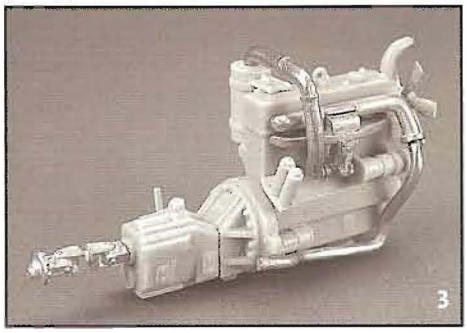
The kit is packaged in the regular sized Accurate Armour box and is truly bursting at the seams with parts. Again, we see a nice blend of multi-media components, with the bulk of the bits being cast in a gray resin. Included is a generous amount of white metal parts, a sheet of photo-etch brass, various sizes of plastic and brass rod, wire and thread for the complex cabling systems, a sheet of clear plastic for the glazing and a large sheet of decals. This last item will allow for many marking options, including a full range of beautifully done British markings. The instructions are not too bad, done in the now familiar Accurate Armour style of in-progress photos and a verbal description of the assembly sequence. I would strongly suggest you keep as much reference data on hand as you can. A copy of the manual would also be very helpful, if you can find one.

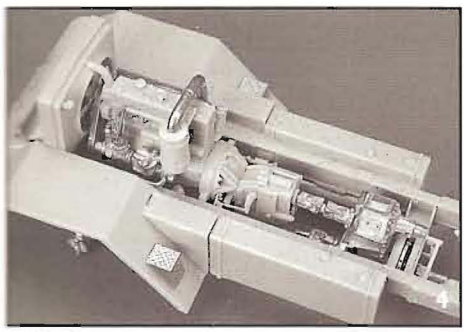
Before starting the build, I inventoried and sorted all of the parts. This kit contains some 250 plus parts! Incidentally, Accurate Armour kindly reduced this down from Kay Man's original 450 plus parts. Wow!

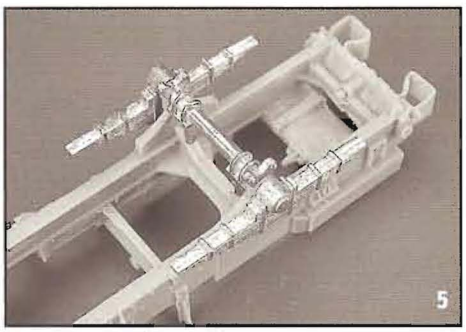
Sorting took a good two evenings of work. Clean up and labeling of the bits took another two evenings, with no major pour plug issues to speak of. The instructions should be carefully studied; there are numerous options for the way you can display the model. Front pulls, rear pulls, crane lifting with boom stabilizers, side pulls and just about every way you can think of that the vehicle might be used. Accurate Armour has kindly supplied all of these parts with a large amount of stowage and ancillary gear to give each option the proper look. I would recommend you decide early on how you want to display the beast and proceed accordingly.

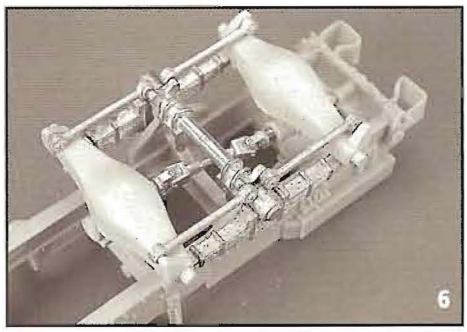


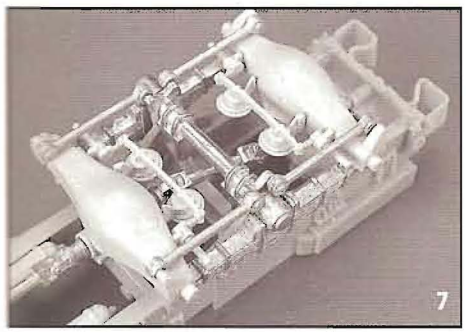


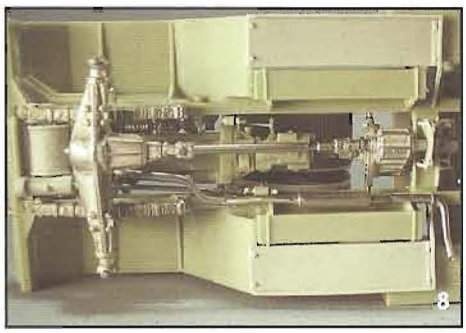


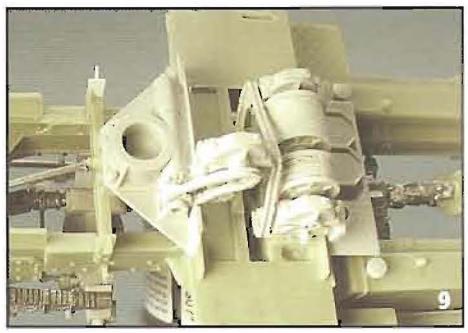


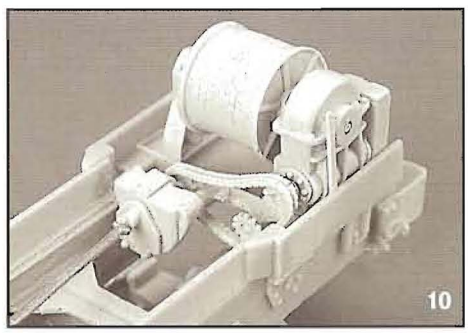












1. The mercifully single-piece frame. 2, 3. The engine with the distributor wired, just for the heck of it. 4. The engine and transfer case in place. Note the photo-etched steps on the fenders. 5-7. This sequence shows the installation of the rear springs, axle, shafts and air brakes. 8. The front drive train components. 9. The boom base and its winch drive. Check out those chains. 10. Another beauty, the rear 21-ton winch.

Construction begins with the assembly of the Continental straight six-cylinder engine. The engine and transmission, part 14, is a one-piece unit and very well done. Just follow the pictures and you will be fine. Accurate Armour provides photo-etch fan belts, which I thought was pretty cool. I drilled a hole in the transmission and pinned the output shaft on both sides so it could be adjusted when the engine was mounted. While in the area, the ignition wires were added from thin solder. Reference photos will give you a good idea of their placement. You could spend a great deal of time adding little things to the engine; I intended to have a closed bonnet, so I didn't go too crazy. Believe me, there is plenty of other stuff to do.

The chassis, part 1, is mercifully a one-piece casting and will require some careful clean up. My chassis had a few bubbles and some broken mounting brackets that were no big deal to fix. With the chassis upside down, you can begin with the front winch, parts 98 and 97, which need to be assembled before attacking the front suspension. I also added the front winch prop shaft and the shaft coupler that mounts to the inside of the right hand side of the frame. The front suspension can now be added. This involves attaching the two front leaf springs and front axle. With these elements in place, the shock absorbers, 123 and 124, were added along with the steering tie link, 112. The steering arm, 110, was missing on my kit, so I made one from the spares box.

Prior to mounting the transfer case, I drilled out the mounting holes and added brass rod for strength and a slip plane for positioning the case itself. I also drilled out the input and output holes in the case. I did this so the various drive shafts could be pinned and slid in and out, allowing me some flexibility when attaching them. Each of the four drive and prop shafts were shortened with a file and a pin was drilled and glued to each end. At this point, the transfer case was loosely fit into position and the parking brake, 95, with its associated details, was added. You can also add the air tanks, 119, to the inside of the frame. I suppose you could add the brake lines, but I figured they would not be visible when the model was complete. Believe me, they won't be.

The rear suspension starts with the mounting of the main cross member, which is glued to the frame. The rear axles were drilled out like the transfer case. The leaf springs were pressed onto the main cross member and the upper Panhard links, 117, were tacked to the springs and axles. This allowed me to flip the chassis assembly over and establish a ride height. Once satisfied that things were level, I began tacking everything together. At this point, the pinned prop shaft, 92, was fit between the axles and the air brakes were added. Please take note of the orientation of the axles. Part 6 is in the front, while part 7 is in the rear. I finished the area off by adding the rear air connectors, 129 and 130, along with the tow pintle, 180.

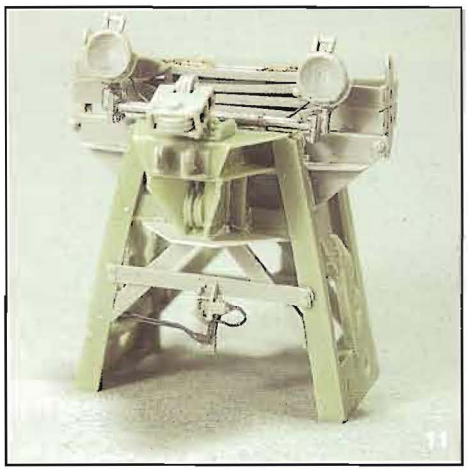
Feeling good, Billy Ray!

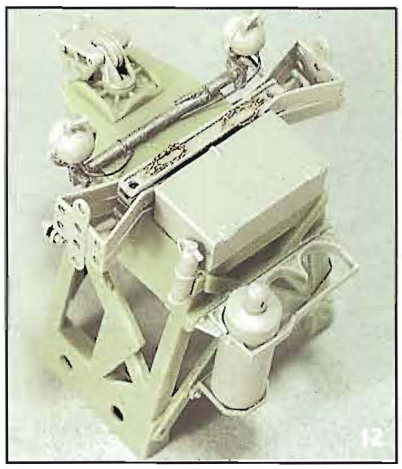
The completed engine and radiator were now added. The pinning of the drive shafts made their attachment much easier. I now added the exhaust system; water feed pipe, 27, the running boards and the photo-etch steps to both fenders. Geek Fact #1: The Kay Man informed me that the filler caps are not accurate (post war addition) and were modeled after a WLF used in the Netherlands. So, if you are inclined, you can replace them.

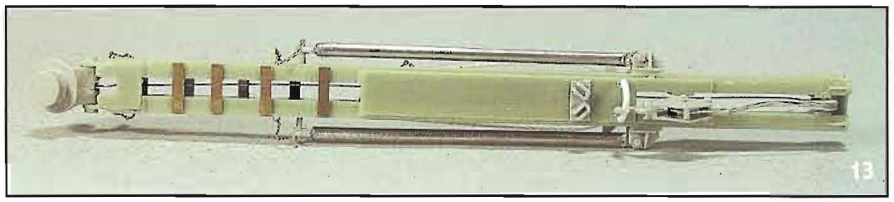
Winch time

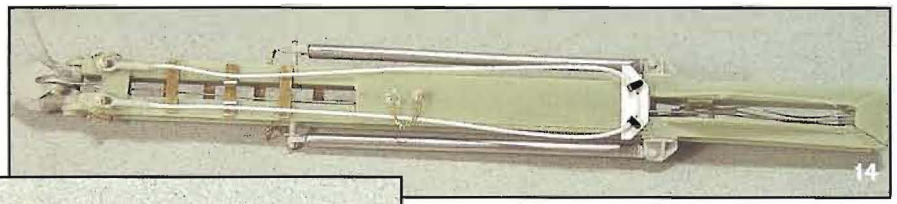
The massive 21-ton rear Gar Wood winch was the next order of business. On the real thing, the winch was driven by the truck's engine through a drive shaft powering a gearbox with chain driven output. The gearbox had two forward speeds and one reverse. I drilled and pinned the winch trunions and drum, allowing it to spin and offer up the best side to the viewer, making the attaching of the cable easier. The gearbox, 104, and drive sprockets were added, as well as the resin drive chain, 108. This chain is a cool idea. The drive shaft for the winch finished off the assembly. A piece of the kit-supplied string was attached to the drilled out cable end. I knew I was going for a stowed look, so I made the cable end long enough to tuck into one of the rear bumpers.

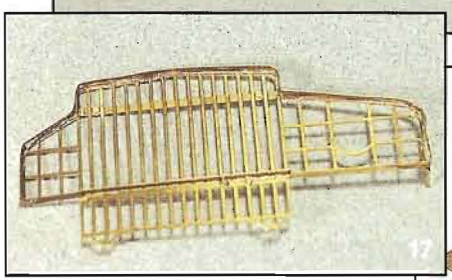
Now the fun really begins. The US6A 7.2-ton crane

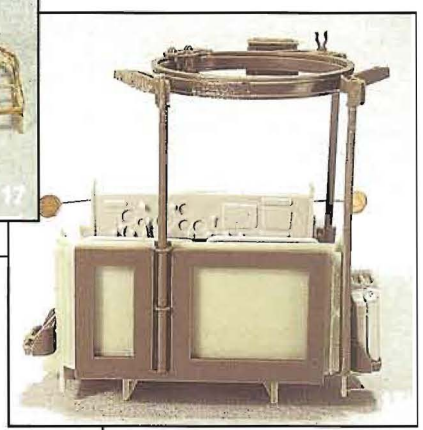


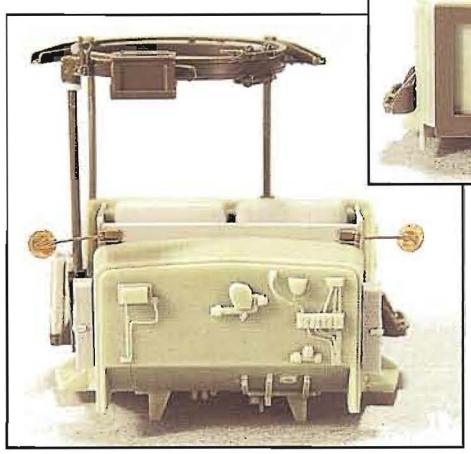




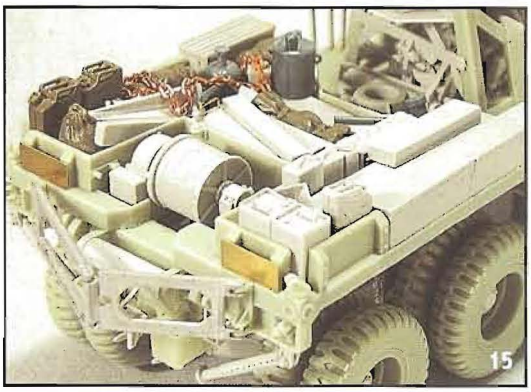


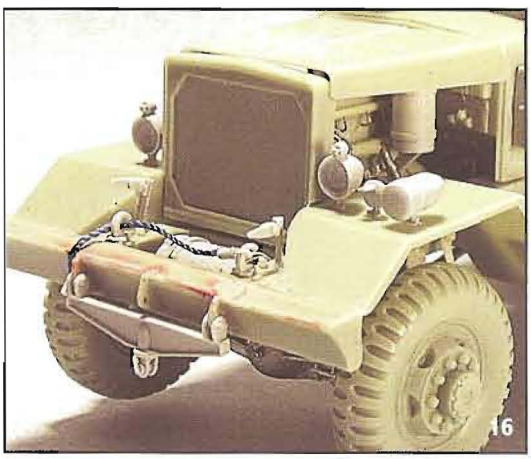






11, 12. The crane tower takes shape. The work lights were opened up for MV lenses. 13, 14. The crane boom has quite a bit of detail on it. Note the many white metal and photo-etched pieces. 15. The bed of the truck in place. Much of the stowage is provided in the kit. 16. The completed front end waiting to receive the grill. 17. And speaking of... The finished photo-etch grill assembly. 18, 19. The cab with the Tamiya ring mount—a perfect fit.





is, in my opinion, the focal point of the kit, and a tough little model in its own right. Not so much from an assembly standpoint, but due to the crane being broken down into three units that have to be assembled, painted, attached and rigged. This isn't so bad in itself, but the winch and tower mount to the chassis crane base. Assembling the entire crane as a sub assembly is out of the question. After an evening or two of head scratching, there was only one thing to do. Deal with it.

The crane base was built as a sub assembly; constantly checking it's fit to the chassis. The two winches were attached to the main crane base, 30, in the same manner as the rear one. The large winch is for the crane cable, while the small one is for the boom elevation and the in-line gearbox is for the boom swing drive. Keep that in mind. Like the rear winch, we get more sprockets and resin chain that need to be attached with the crane base off the chassis. The right and left stowage bins were added per the instructions, as well as the telescoping outriggers. I positioned mine stowed. If you were to model the vehicle lifting a heavy load, you would have to position them outboard and use the support legs with a block underneath. In any event, you have to slide the outriggers into a slot in part 30 and add the clevis, 69 (right and left), for the support leg mounting. My model will have them eventually stowed up on the crane tower.

Before moving to the crane tower I knocked out a few more chassis bits. The headlights were drilled out for MV Lenses 155 and mounted along with the siren. I also added the whiffle tree to the front "tree buster" bumper, along with the front tow hooks, air couplings and a length of string and cable end for the front winch.

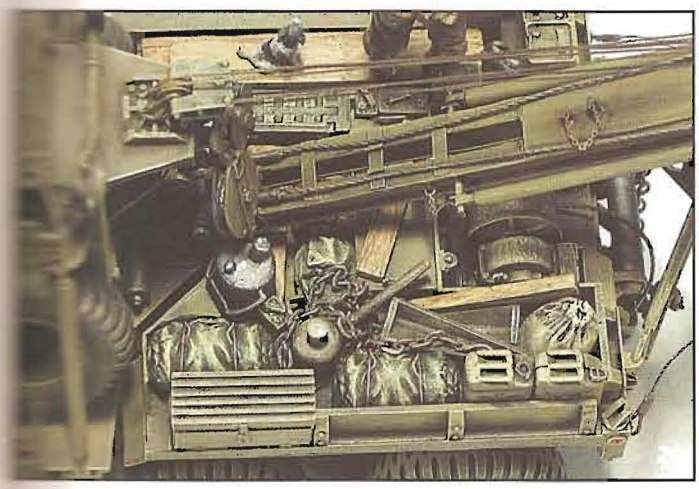
Crane your neck

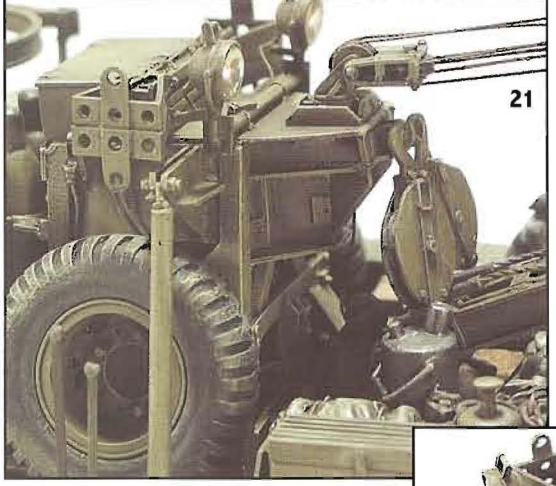
On to the crane tower. The first thing to deal with before tackling the tower itself is the base for the boom, 87. There are more chain and sprockets here, going from the output of the inline gearbox, 62, to the input of the crane base. From here on out you will have to check the fit to the truck bed constantly. The crane tower is a model in itself. Mine required a lot of delicate clean up work to get things to fit right. Most of the work is done for you; the only thing to watch out for is the location of the x-braces. There is a little shelf for the short acetylene tank that needs to be fit before adding the tank itself. I also added the cylinder lock bar making sure that the oxygen tanks could be slid into place farther down the line. They rest on the chassis base plate, so attaching them now is a no go situation.

With the crane tower structure taking shape, it is now time for the finer details. I began by adding the right and left strut mount outriggers, 42 and 43. The top toolbox, fire extinguisher and rear tow hooks were added, too. The rear spotlight-mounting bar was added and the lamps themselves were drilled out for MV Lenses 180. The spot light mountings are a bit weak, so take care. The boom support pulley was assembled using brass pins that would allow everything to pivot and the pulley to rotate. I figured I would need this flexibility when it came time to rig.

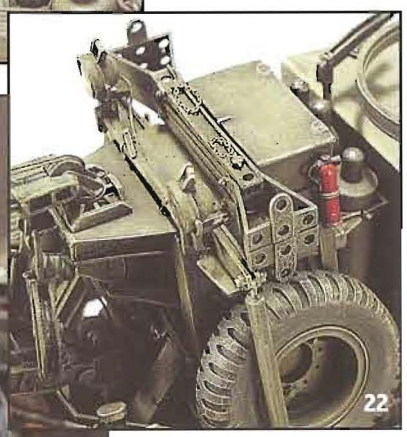
While checking the fit of the cab, I decided it was now time give it a little love. The interior of the cab is a pretty straightforward assembly. I added everything except the steering wheel, which would get in the way of painting and adding the decals for the gauges and data plates. Cool. The steering wheel is a British version, so if you are doing an American version you will have to replace this with one from the Tamiya Dragon Wagon. I found this out too late. The windshield was cleaned and the photo-etch wiper blades added. I cut a piece of clear acetate to size and set it aside for finishing. I also added the rear view mirrors and the front toolboxes, 169, to the outside of the cab. Be sure that the side toolboxes are attached with the chains on the box falling in the direction of gravity, which on this planet means "down."

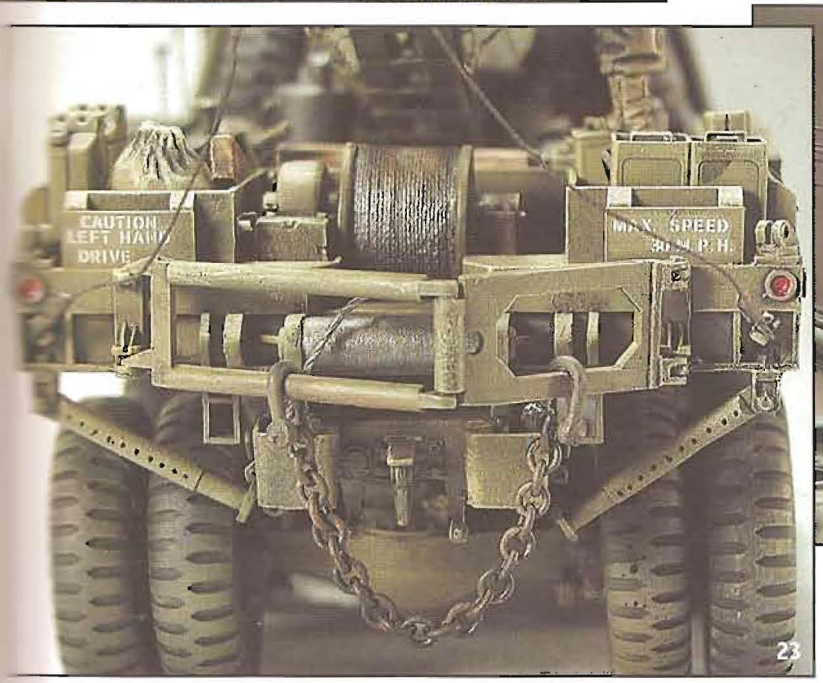
Not being able to leave well enough alone, I decided

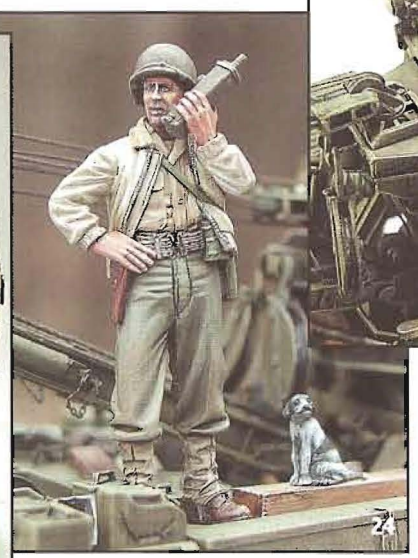




20. A look down into the bed and at the boom. That rigging will kill ya. All of the stowage was glued in place before painting. 21, 22. The top of the tower with all the various gear in place. 23. This assembly could be used to make pulls from the side. The decals are from the kit. 24. The dude is a Warriors item and the dog is from the Tamiya truck set.







to add a little extra to the cab in the way of the .50 cal MG and ring. For this I used the Tamiya update set for the deuce and a half. This is a cool little set that includes the complete MG mounting, jerry cans with mounting brackets, canvas doors and a bunch of other cool details that are useful for adding detail to any U.S. truck. You even get a dog. How cool is that?

To add the MG mounting I had to remove the brackets that were cast on the rear of the cab. I was worried about the fit, so I compared the Accurate Armour cab with the Tamiya one and found that it was spot on. My hat is off to the pattern maker. With the rear mounting removed and sanded I added the MG mounting per the instructions—a perfect fit. I also added the Tamiya jerry cans and brackets to the side of the cab. The straps were plundered from an old photo-etch fret. The canvas top needed to be carefully sanded to get a good fit. I also had to remove a little material in order to get it to clear the MG mounting brackets. Needless to say, a good amount of dry fitting was required to get the top and windshield to fit properly. More assemblies for the painting pile.

While in the cab area, I decided to take a look at the fit of the bonnet. The bonnet is made up of four pieces and is designed to open up butterfly style, like the real thing. The parts lend themselves to an open position, but I was looking for the closed up look. I glued the upper bonnet sides together from the backside, forming one piece. The photo-etch latches and brass rod lift handles were added to the sides. With the cab tacked into position, I adjusted the fit of the three pieces. The bonnet sides are very thin and were also warped. Heating them would not straighten them out so I added small lengths of plastic angle to the backside. This formed a rib structure that brought them back into position. With careful sanding and dry fitting, I was able to get an acceptable fit. When completed, the upper bonnet will be able to be lifted off, revealing the engine.

The last item for the cab is the massive front brush guard. This will also need to be built, test fit and set aside for painting. If you put the guard on prior to painting, you will not be able to get at the headlights. The brush guard is made up of a beautifully done photo-etch brass structure and a series of strips that form a flange around the whole structure. The flange can either be super glued or soldered. You have to start from one end and wrap it around the curves as you go. I went with the glue method, but in retrospect I think solder would have been the better choice. With the guard complete, you will have to check the fit to the fenders. Mine was a bit tight, so I had to do a little sanding on the fenders and the guard itself in order for it to fit. The guard will also require two support rods that are made from brass rod. These have to be added after the assembly is finally attached.

Make your bed

The bed is the easiest part of the whole project. For the inside, you have a choice of two layouts for the stowage boxes. I went with layout 1, which seems to be the most common and would afford the most room for stowage. Boxes 132, 134 and 135 were added per the diagram and with no difficulties. Two lift handles made from brass rod, which need to be added to box 134. The pulley guide frames, 136 and 137, were added to the rear, along with the other various mounting brackets. Since my model was in travel mode, I added the rear struts, 139, in the stowed position. The kit provides two part struts that would allow you to show them supporting the rear of the vehicle as if it were lifting a heavy load. Speaking of loads, Accurate Armour has provided a ton of cool stowage items and I used just about all of them, plus a few of my own. All of the stowage was added prior to painting and the fit of the bed was constantly checked to make sure it was not interfering with the boom, tower and chassis.

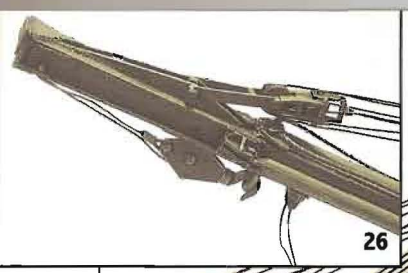
Boom, go boom

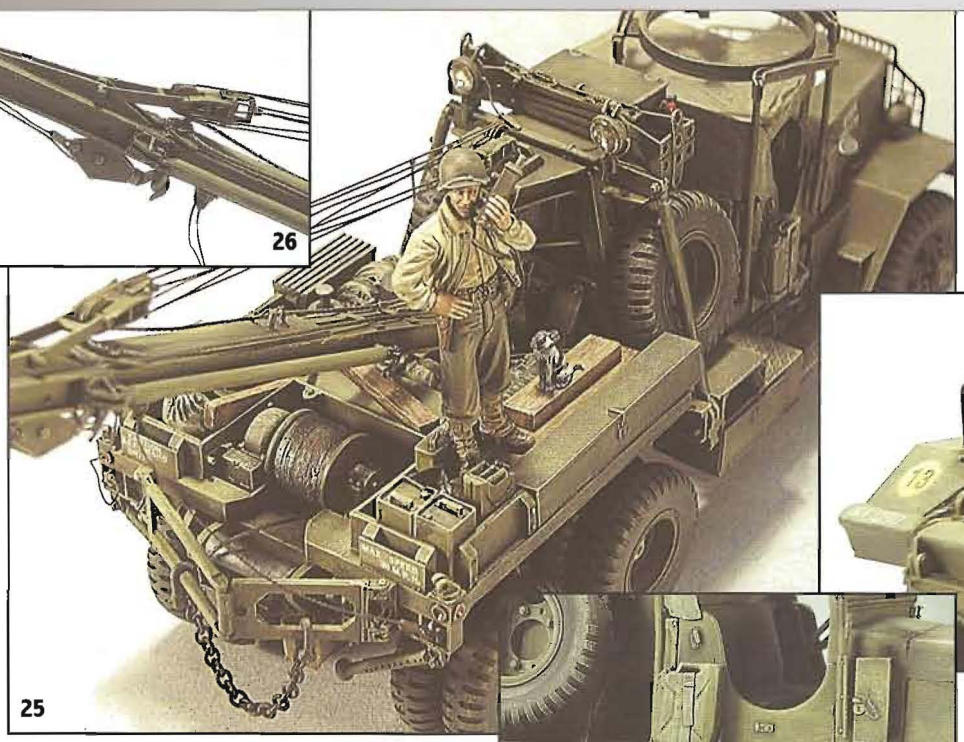
The boom is another one of those models within a model. The basic structure is a two-piece construction with photo-etch tie plates. Again, there are options for how you display the boom. Continuing with the travel mode theme, I stowed the boom struts on each side and used the photo-etch retaining chains. The pivot base, 72, and pulley wheel, 83, were pinned as mentioned above. The main pulley at the end of the boom can be positioned in either the top or bottom position. The bottom would be used for heavier lifts. This was also pinned and a Verlinden nut was added to either side of the pivot. The holes for the lower position were also drilled out, but not the pulley.

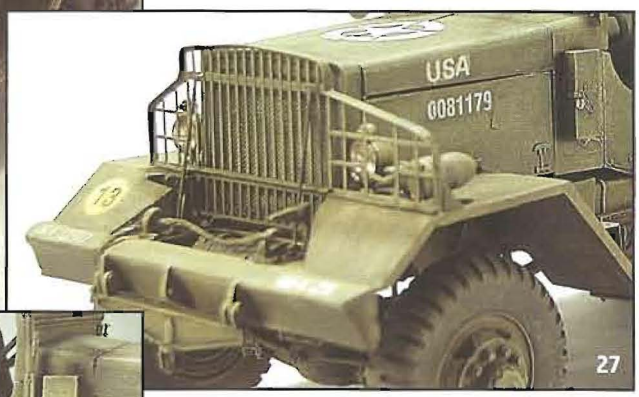
I had to remake one side of my frame to boom lift link, 75. The horizontal and vertical boom lift pulleys and the mounting, 73, 74 and 83 were also drilled and pinned. I know that this must seem like a lot of work, but you will need all of the pivots to move freely in order to pull off the rigging. You have been warned. This assembly was also tossed into the paint pile. This is the only pivot that I did not pin, due to the weak nature of the link. The whole thing can be glued when the angle of the boom is finally decided.

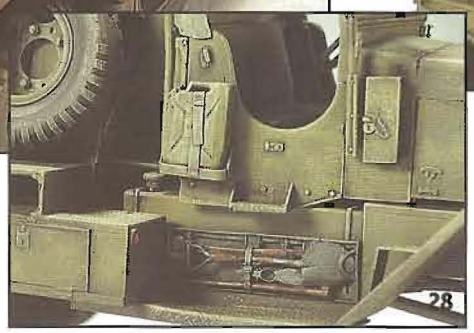
Checking my references, I noticed a few missing details on the boom. There is a plate on the top that contains the mounting brackets for the tow cable. I made this out of plastic card and used left over photo-etch cable brackets and re-routed the cable per the manual. The cable was made from the kit-supplied ends and string, with the ends being retained at the base with plastic rod and photo-etch chain. I also added the mounting post for the tow bar using the tech manual's photos for location and another photo-etch chain. The underside of the boom received the boom travel stays, 88, and the tow hook-mounting bar that was made from bent plastic rod.

At this point the rigging was really starting to









25. "Hey, just where is this broken down truck, anyway?" This shot provides a good, overall view of the completed model. The build was a hump, but the finished piece is a stunner. 26. The business end of the boom with its various shackles. 27. The bonnet was a tough fit, but with careful dry fitting and sanding, it went into place. 28. Tool time! The side mounted box and standard pioneer rack.

bother me, so I started with the main lift cable. The hook was assembled per the instructions and I used the kit-supplied solder for the cable. To do this, I fished the cable in from the bottom of the boom and snaked it through to the top pulley, leaving extra at the back. There are many ways in which this cable could have been used. For maximum lift, one end would be fixed to the boom and the cable would have been double looped to form a block and tackle. I looped mine over the main pulley, threaded it through the hook pulley and back around the main pulley. The top of the hook was drilled out and the end of the cable was glued in. The trick here is to pay out enough cable to allow the hook to be stowed on the bar on the bottom of the boom. This was the easy one.

Hey, you look familiar

So there I sat with what looked like a WLF with a million bits and sub assemblies to be painted and attached. Yes folks, there was no getting around it, paint time. All of the loose bits and subs were fixed to a piece of cardboard using two-sided masking tape. At this point, everything was sprayed with Armory Black Primer. This was allowed to dry for a few days. A few coats and many repositions were required to get a good coverage. The next step was to spray the whole under carriage and bed bottom with a mixture of Tamiya Flat Earth and Red Brown. For the Olive Drab I used Testors enamel, spraying it on so some of the black still shows through. The base color was lightened a few times with Testors Panzer Yellow, these coats just being misted on the high spots. Once the enamels dried, the whole thing was oversprayed with Tamiya Desert Sand, paying extra attention to the under carriage. I let the whole works dry for about a week and then shot it with Testors dull coat to seal the enamels before washing with oils.

Prior to the wash, many of the individual details were painted in their appropriate color. Too many to mention in this space, so we will stick to the basic theme. The wash consisted of Winsor & Newton Raw Umber and Ivory Black. Most of the later dry brushing was concentrated on the under carriage in progressively lighter earth tones. The major sub assemblies were lightly dry brushed with lighter greens and khakis. With the painting process moving along, it was time to start bringing things together.

The crane tower was the first major sub to be placed. With all of the dry runs, I still had to due some sanding to the rear of the frame to get it to fit. The chain guard thankfully covered the damage inflicted by the carving. With the cab interior completely finished, decals and all, I attached the cab, checking the fit with the bonnet top. The bed was now added and the bonnet sides and top were attached. Don't forget to add the acetylene bottles behind the cab. The boom angle was set and nailed down, along with the frame to boom lift link assembly. It was starting to look like a WLF at long last.

The next step was to add pastels. Blackish brown tones were brushed into all the recesses and feathered out to add depth. The under carriage and wheels were dusted with lighter sand and earth tones. The model was then shot with Aero-Masters Semi Gloss to seal the pastels. This gave me a glossy surface for the decals and offered a good surface to go back in with acrylic pin washes to further outline the details. The pin wash, in this case, consists of black watercolor from a tube, thinned with water and dish soap to break the surface tension of the paint. This allows it to flow into the crevices through capillary action. How scientific is this?

Accurate Armour provides a very extensive sheet of decals for this kit, allowing for many marking options. I marked mine with the U.S. option, 9th Army 464th Maintenance Company Vehicle 29. This option would allow me to display it with a Tamiya Dragon Wagon, which includes markings for the same unit. Most U.S. WLF were very bland as far as markings go. It is common to see them without even so much as a star. Accurate Armour's decals are usually among the best out there, but I had some problems with mine in that they did not want to come off the sheet and when they did, they cracked. I used the front bumper codes, bridging disk and the bonnet tactical markings. The remainders were pillaged from various dry transfer sets.

Rigging of the boom lift was the last hurdle. The instructions recommend using either the thin solder provided or straight plastic rod to make the cables appear taut. Neither of these options looked convincing to me, so I had to find another material. I ended up settling for nylon model ship thread and rigging it the way the real thing would be. It was a good thing I made the pulleys free to rotate! Following the kit diagram and photos, I started at the rear horizontal pulley and worked my way backwards, ending up with one end being glued into the fixed point on the lift link and the other end crammed down a pre-drilled hole in the tower. By starting at the rear, it was possible to tighten the thread and glue it once I made it around the corner of another pulley. The cables were brush painted a mixture of black and silver and weathered with rust colored washes.

The model was then shot with a coat of clear flat and the rest of the loose details added; windshield, spare tires, MV Lenses, brush guard and tower struts. A tow chain was added to the back using the kit-supplied chain and tow shackles from the spares box. A suitable figure was selected from the Warriors range to add a sense of scale. I could not resist the mutt from the Tamiya accessory set so he (or she) was added as well.

Open the door and let me out

That about wraps it up folks, I hope I didn't leave anything out. The end result is a very "Cool Kit," but one that is also very, very expensive. It may be the most expensive truck kit I've ever built. Should this scare you off? No, is my answer. You and I both know that this thing will never see the light of day in plastic. It's just too complex and the subject is not "popular" enough. So, if you are a truck geek or like engineering vehicles, this one's for you. It's not a quick or an easy build, but the end result is amazing.

—Nick Vanston

MMiR RECCE

Accurate Armour Ward LaFrance M1A1 Heavy Wrecker. Kit number K108. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price £148.94, or about $220.00. The price in the U.S. tends to be a bit higher, around $250.00.

References

U.S. Army Heavy Wreckers of WW2 6 Ton 6x6 Ward LaFrance and Kenworth by Jochen Vollert and Michael Franz. Tankograd Publishing. A good comprehensive look at the development of the heavy wrecker concept. Sparse on photos of the big guy, though.

World War 2 Military Vehicles Transport and Halftracks by G.N. Georgano. Osprey Automotive, ISBN 1 85532 406 7. A few photos and a description of the various models.

Allied-Axis, The Photo Journal of the Second War, Issue number 5, Ampersand Publishing Co. Inc., 2002. More combat photos than I have ever seen in one place. Includes some tech manual stuff and tons and tons of photos of restored Wards. Awesome!

THE AMPERSAND
Euro Tour 2002

This September, Ampersand Publishing will again host a tour of the Euro Militaire Exhibition held in Folkstone, England. Like last year's tour it will include not only Euro Militaire, but also an extra special day trip: Normandy, France for a tour of the historic beaches.

As many of you know, Euro Militaire is England's premier military modeling event. The show features an enormous vendor area and a competition, along with outdoor events, vehicle displays and more. Some of the vendors attending previous years' shows have been Accurate Armour, Azimut, Cromwell, DES Kits, Resicast, Andrea, Hornet Miniatures and New Connection. Dozens of smaller vendors also attend and they represent many, many other manufacturers. AND, don't forget the books. Several book vendors are always in attendance and they represent many interesting and hard to find foreign titles.

Although originally conceived as a figure show, Euro Militaire has grown to encompass a huge armor following and in the last two years the Best of Show Award has gone to an armor model.

Historex Agents, a well-known English modeling distributor, once ran the show, but several years ago they turned it over to Nexus Special Interests. Nexus may be known to many of you as the publishers of Military Modelling magazine. Euro Militaire is a professionally run event, organized by the same company, in the same venue year after year. It is truly a treat for the modeler to attend.

How it all breaks down

This year's tour will differ from last year's in that we will be staying right in Folkstone. We found that the trip times last year were just too long for the entire group (although talking about tanks is a great way to kill time). This year we will proceed directly to the hotel(s) in Folkstone after our flights. Folkstone is not far from Dover, which will be our embarkation point for the trip to Normandy. Here is the proposed itinerary:

· **September 11, 2002** - (Wednesday) We depart a day earlier this year. All gates depart for London on Virgin Atlantic Airways. The flight will be between six and ten hours, depending on your point of origin.

· **September 12, 2002** – (Thursday) All flights arrive in London. We will probably move in one or two small groups to the hotels, due to the distances involved and the various arrival times. We will be staying in one of two hotels located near the exhibition hall, depending on the final size of the group. Once you arrive at your hotel in Folkstone, the remainder of the day will be devoted to jet lag recovery or relaxing. There will be an orientation meeting at 5:00 pm with a round of drinks on the house (actually on Pat—the cheap bastard).

· **September 13, 2002** – (Friday) Very early morning departure to Normandy. We will board a coach at the hotel that will take us to the Dover port. There we will board the cross-channel ferry on foot and make the trip across. A separate coach will meet us in France and take us on to the beaches. This is an existing Virgin tour and a French speaking guide will accompany us throughout. The tour also includes admission to the Invasion Museum (Musée du Debarquement). This will be an intense tour, due to the historical and emotional nature of the location, as well as the distances involved. We don't anticipate being back in Folkstone until the later part of the evening.

· **September 14, 2002** – (Saturday) Because of the proximity of the hotels to the show, you can sleep a little later or have a lengthened breakfast. Hotel #1 is located across the street from the exhibition hall and #2 is located only four blocks away. The show opens at 9:00 am.

· **September 15, 2002** – (Sunday) Same as Saturday, but the show opens at 10:00 am and ends at 5:00 pm. We will depart for London after the show via coach at approximately 6:00 pm. We should arrive in London by 7:30 or 8:00. There, we will check into the Posthouse Kensington Hotel, the same London location as last year's tour.

Last year, some opted not to attend the show on Sunday. If you do not wish to attend the show on this day, Folkstone is an excellent jumping off point for a day trip back to France.

· **September 16, 2002** – (Monday) Both Monday and Tuesday are devoted to free time in London or your personal choice of side trips. Although they are not specifically included in the tour, we will provide detailed information (train times, prices, bus times, hours, etc.) on traveling to The Tank Museum, the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, the Imperial War Museum, London and other areas of interest.

The reason for the deviation from last year's itinerary is that the travel times by coach were quite long. This is mostly due to the heavy London traffic and rush hour traffic on the London ring roads. We anticipate that public transportation can be as much as one hour (or more) quicker to both The Tank Museum and Duxford. We cancelled last year's coach trip to the IWM in London, as the museum was only 15-20 minutes travel from our hotel (some even walked). If you opt for a cab, the travel time can be as little as 10 minutes. Most tour members visited the museum at their leisure.

· **September 17, 2002** – (Tuesday) Same as Monday. We are encouraging tour members to take the above listed day trips in small groups as this can make it a little more fun. Throughout your stay in London you will be armed with the very competent Virgin London Map and Guidebook. The guidebook also contains a lengthy list of London restaurants and several restaurant vouchers. We will also be providing a short list of restaurants that we have discovered during our trips.

· **September 18, 2002** – (Wednesday) Depart London for all gates via provided coach transfers. Departure and arrival times vary based on your destination.

What it will cost:

The trip is available from the following gates:

New York (JFK) or Newark (EWR) to Heathrow (LHR) at	$1,515.00
Boston (BOS) to Heathrow (LHR) at	$1,575.00
Washington DC (IAD) to Heathrow (LHR) at	$1,590.00
Miami (MIA) or Orlando (MCO) to Gatwick (LGW) at	$1,665.00
Los Angeles (LAX) or San Francisco (SFO) to Heathrow (LHR) at	$1,690.00
Las Vegas (LAS) to Gatwick (LGW) at	$1,765.00
Chicago* at	$1875.00

*Virgin no longer offers Chicago as a gate. Continental Airlines is Virgin's domestic travel partner and this flight would simply take you from Chicago to JFK, where you would board a Virgin aircraft. You would be booked as a Continental passenger through to Heathrow. This option is somewhat expensive and we suggest searching for one of the many inexpensive fares available to any of the other locations, especially those who are travelling from other locations in the Midwest.

Official airport codes are in parentheses. The prices do not include transportation to the departure point. You will need a valid U.S. Passport to travel.

What is included:

The prices are only slighter higher than last year's. This is primarily due to the new $100.00 Federal security tax.

The price includes round trip airfare, departure tax, transfers to and from the airport, six nights stay in the various hotels, breakfast each morning, event admissions, Invasion Museum admission and all coach transportation. Rooms are double occupancy, which means you need to pick a roommate, or we'll pick one for you. Single supplements are available for an additional $250.00. Payment plans are available and ALL major credit cards are accepted.

You may also omit any portion of the trip to explore the UK, London or Paris, if you choose to do so, although we cannot offer a reduction in the overall price. Each tour can also be tailored to your additional needs, if for instance, you wish to alter your departure times or days. Please call or write for details.

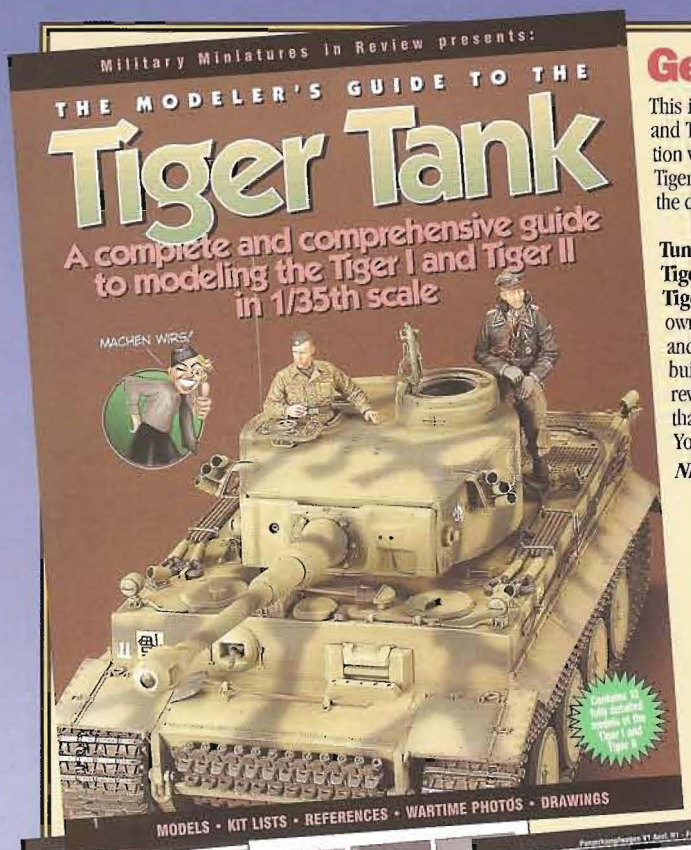
All bookings are made directly through Ampersand and all arrangements are through Virgin Atlantic Vacations. All prices are subject to change (sorry) and a $150.00 deposit is required to secure a reservation. $50.00 of this is non-refundable (sorry, again). Hurry, because time is limited!

What is not included:

No provision is made for your lunch or dinner each day. You are welcome to check out the neighborhood around the exhibition hall in Folkstone, or anywhere in the city for your evening meal. There are plenty of eateries in the vicinity of the Euro Militaire show, including the show bar. London has thousands of restaurants and you will receive information from both Ampersand and Virgin on how to check them out.

You will also, of course, need to bring your own spending money. What to bring for the vendor area at the show is described in more detail in the information package.

A complete trip package, including application forms and other information is available from Ampersand Publishing Company.

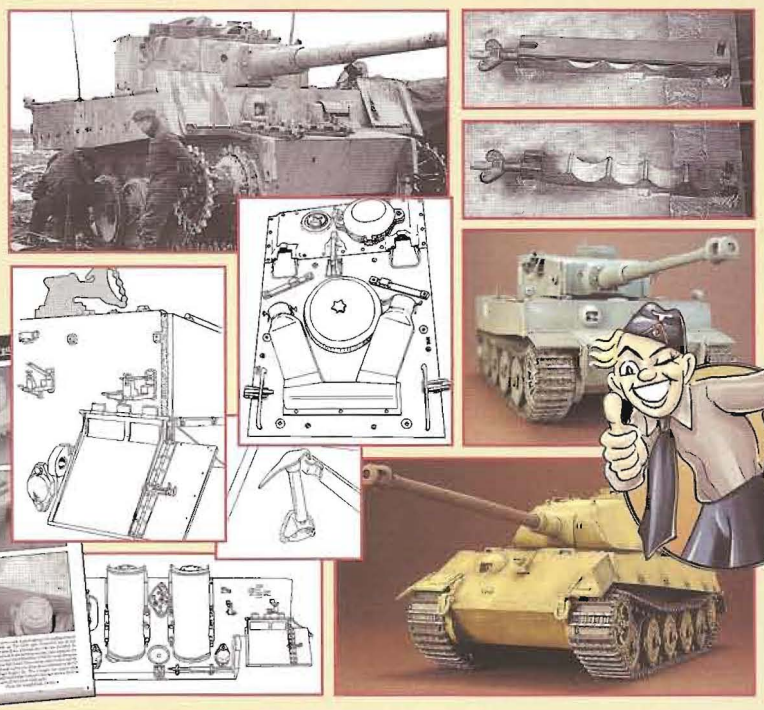

Military Miniatures in Review presents:
THE MODELER'S GUIDE TO THE
Tiger Tank
A complete and comprehensive guide to modeling the Tiger I and Tiger II in 1/35th scale
MACHEN WIR!
MODELS • KIT LISTS • REFERENCES • WARTIME PHOTOS • DRAWINGS

Get ready for a Tiger extravaganza!

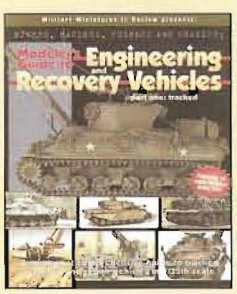
This is the most elaborate modeling guide we have ever attempted. The book covers both the Tiger I and Tiger II and is essentially two books in one. The first section contains intensive research information with hundreds of beautifully rendered original line drawings showcasing production details of the Tiger I & II. This includes a photo gallery primarily made up of wartime photos with an emphasis on the details modelers want to see. Contemporary, close-up museum photos are also included.

12 individual Tiger tank models are covered: **Tiger I, prototype; Tiger I, Leningrad; Tiger I, Tunisia; Tiger I, Kursk-SS; Tiger I, Kursk-Army; Tiger I P, Kursk; Tiger I, Mid-Wittman; Tiger I, late; Tiger I, Mid-engine repair; Tiger II, prototype; Tiger II, early-Normandy; Tiger II, production-Ardennes and Tiger II, final-Berlin**. Each model is showcased with its own color spread, then followed by an extensive construction diary illustrating all the details added and modifications made to the models. A large general detailing section follows with helpful tips on building your Tiger. A comprehensive kit, book and accessory list completes the package, with reviews, information on reference sources and more. There is way more material within this book than we can showcase on this page. Think Actiung Panzer meets MMiR and moves in with AMGU. You won't want to niss this one! Soft cover with rigid binding, ~~156~~ 172 pages, 32 in full-color.

NEARING COMPLETION! ***$28.95***



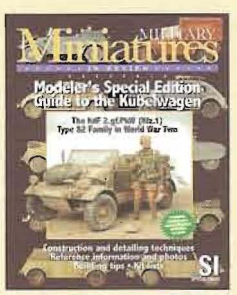
Movers, Haulers, Pushers & Shakers: Modeler's Guide to Engineering and Recovery Vehicles



The first of a two part series covers a wide range of tracked 1:35th scale engineering and recovery vehicles from bridgelayers to ARV's! 13 models are covered in detail from assembly to paint. Each model is accompanied by a detailed section of photos of the actual vehicle, that in some instances includes rare historical photos. 8.5 x 11 inch format. Soft cover with rigid binding, 120 pages, 32 page full-color gallery section.

NOW AVAILABLE! ***$22.95***

MMiR Presents Modeler's Special Edition Guide to the Kübelwagen



The KdF 2.gf.PkW (Kfz. 1) Type 82 Family in World War Two. This special issue of MMiR features 21 super detailed scale models, historical information, kit lists and photos of restored Kiibelwagens and Schwimmwagens! 8.5 x 11 inch magazine-type format. 80 pages, lavishly illustrated in FULL COLOR throughout, with no text advertising. Don't miss this one! Fantastic!

NOW AVAILABLE! ***$17.95***

Modeler's Guide to the Sturmgeschütz

StuG madness descends! MMiR looks at all the StuG variants offered in 1/35th scale. Models A, B, C/D, E, F, F/8, G and StuG IV are covered, with StuH, early mid and late versions of the G and early and late versions of the StuG IV, too. 16 finished models in all! Like the earlier *Modeler's Guide to the Sherman*, this title will include scale plans, dozens of wartime photos and tons of kit reference information, construction notes and detailing tips. The ultimate modeling tool! Soft cover with rigid binding, 120 pages, 32 in full-color.

Late 2002 ..... ***$25.95***

AMGU Too, the 2nd Edition

This will be similar to the first *Armor Modeler's Guide to the 1/35th Scale Universe*, but this time we have greatly expanded the format with a 32-page color center section featuring additional information from dozens of manufacturers and dealers. The new volume also features twice as many product photos. The new guide will contain over 7,000 products listed and described! Also included is a highly useful cross-reference index with products listed by nationality, vehicle type and time period. It will also have a large section covering books and other resources. And for the first time, a comprehensive 1/35th scale figure list will be included. This new book will continue to build on our substantial product resources gathered from all over the world. 8.5 x 11 inch format. Soft cover with rigid binding, ??? pages, 32 page full-color section.

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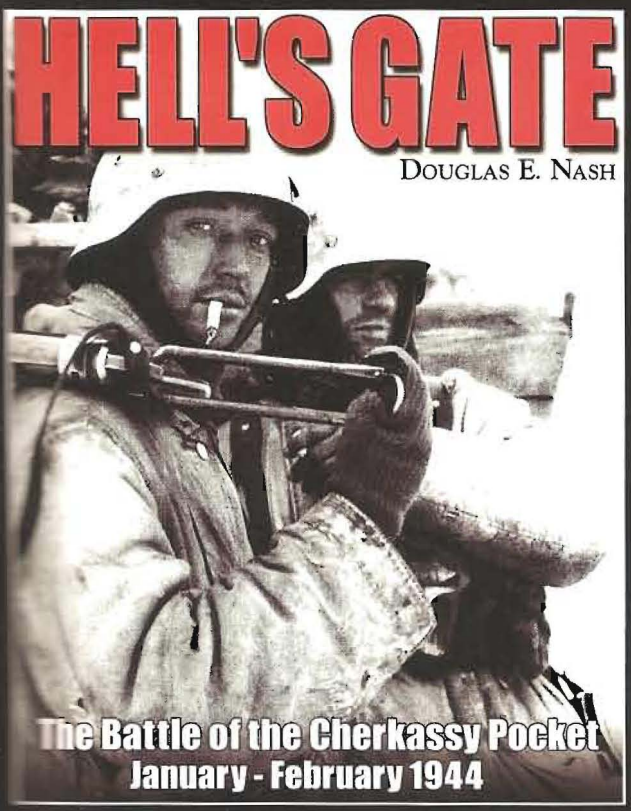
NEW FROM RZM PUBLISHING!



Virtually unknown in the English-speaking world, the Battle of Cherkassy (also known as the Korsun Pocket) still stirs controversy in both the former Soviet Union and in Germany. It was at Cherkassy where the last German offensive strength in the Ukraine was drained away, creating the conditions for the victorious Soviet advance into Poland, Rumania, and the Balkans during the summer and autumn of 1944. Eclipsed by a war of such gigantic proportions that saw battles of over one million men or more as commonplace, the events which occurred along the banks of the Gniloy Tickich river should have faded into obscurity. However, to the 60,000 German soldiers who were encircled there at the end of January 1944, this was perhaps one of the most brutal, physically exhausting, and morally demanding battles they had ever experienced. Thirty-four percent of them would not escape.

The culmination of years of research and survivor interviews, *Hell's Gate* is a riveting hour by hour and day by day account of this desperate struggle analyzed on a tactical level through maps and military transcripts, as well as on a personal level, through the words of the enlisted men and officers who risked the roaring waters of the Gniloy Tickich to avoid certain death at the hands of their Soviet foe. Hard Cover, 8.5" x 11", 424 pages, 220 photos, 14 maps.

Chapter Eight
BUILDING THE KESSEL'S SOUTHERN FRONT

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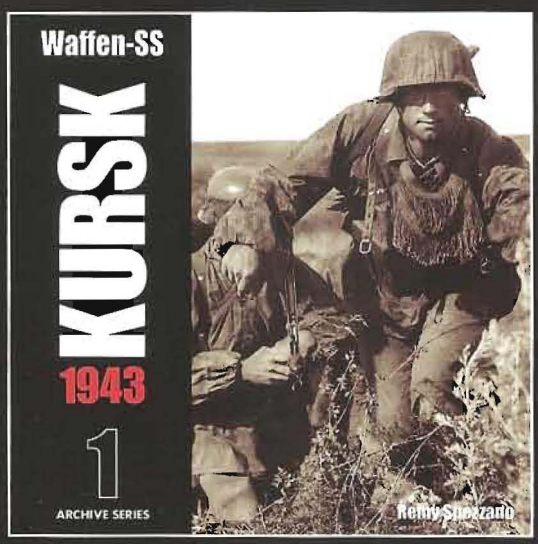
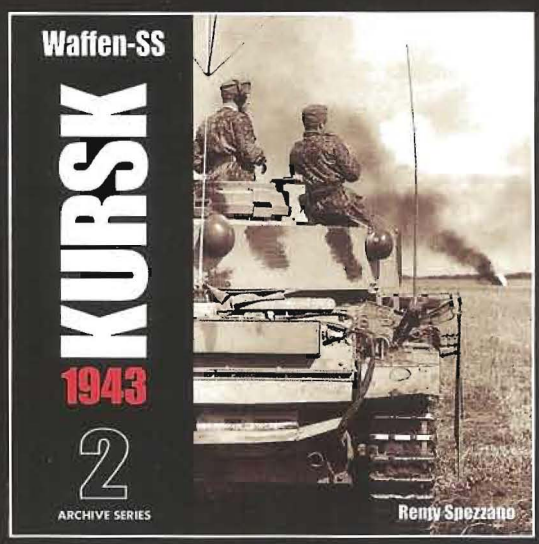


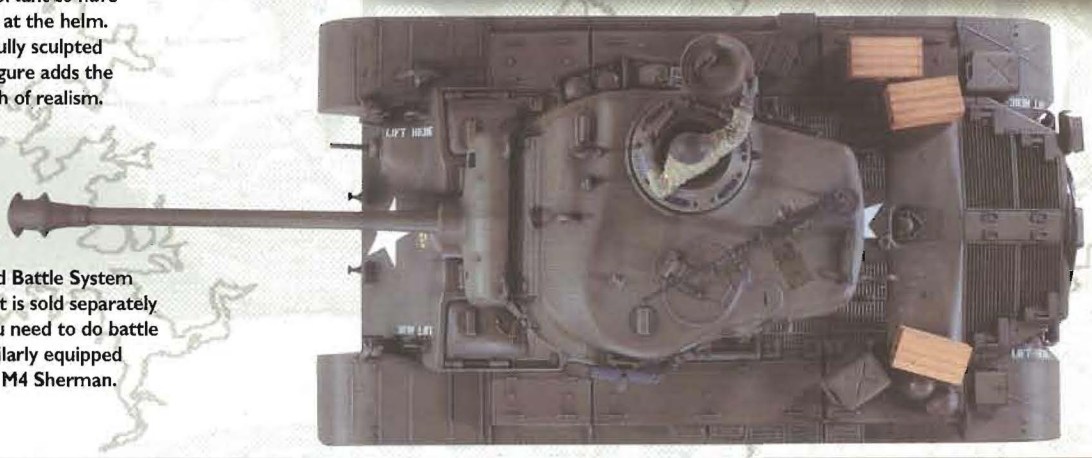


SOUNDS LIKE HELL

The Pershing had virtually no obstacles that it couldn't overcome and neither does ours. We have faithfully recreated the distinctive torsion-bar suspension.

It's always important to have the right man at the helm. Our wonderfully sculpted commander figure adds the finishing touch of realism.

The Infrared Battle System (kit 53447) that is sold separately is just what you need to do battle with a similarly equipped Tiger I or M4 Sherman.



Yes war is hell! And the sound of the Pershing Tank "clanking" up on an enemy position 38th parallel probably had something to do with it. Do you think intimidation played on the minds of the enemy sitting in the path of this beast? We do, so we recorded engine noise from a real Ford GAF water-cooled V8 of an actual M26 Pershing including engine revving while standing still, cannon fire and machine gun with syncopated flashes. Trust us, the intimidation factor was not scaled down. However, we did scale down (*with exacting detail as only Tamiya can do*) we might add, working head lamps, tail lamps and brake lights, accessories like K rations, helmet and jerry cans and accurately detailed torsion-bar suspension. This beauty is by far the finest model of the famed M26 at any scale. All you will need is a 4-channel R/C system and you're ready to roll right along with our 1/16 Tiger I and the 1/16 Sherman. So get to the Tamiya web site WWW.TAMIYAUSA.COM and wage full scale war at 1/16 scale. So make demands for the Pershing of your local hobby retailer and purchase your own *not so* little bit of purgatory.

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1/16 Scale R/C Pershing
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